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A WINDOW OPEN ON THE WORLD

The UNESCO Courier

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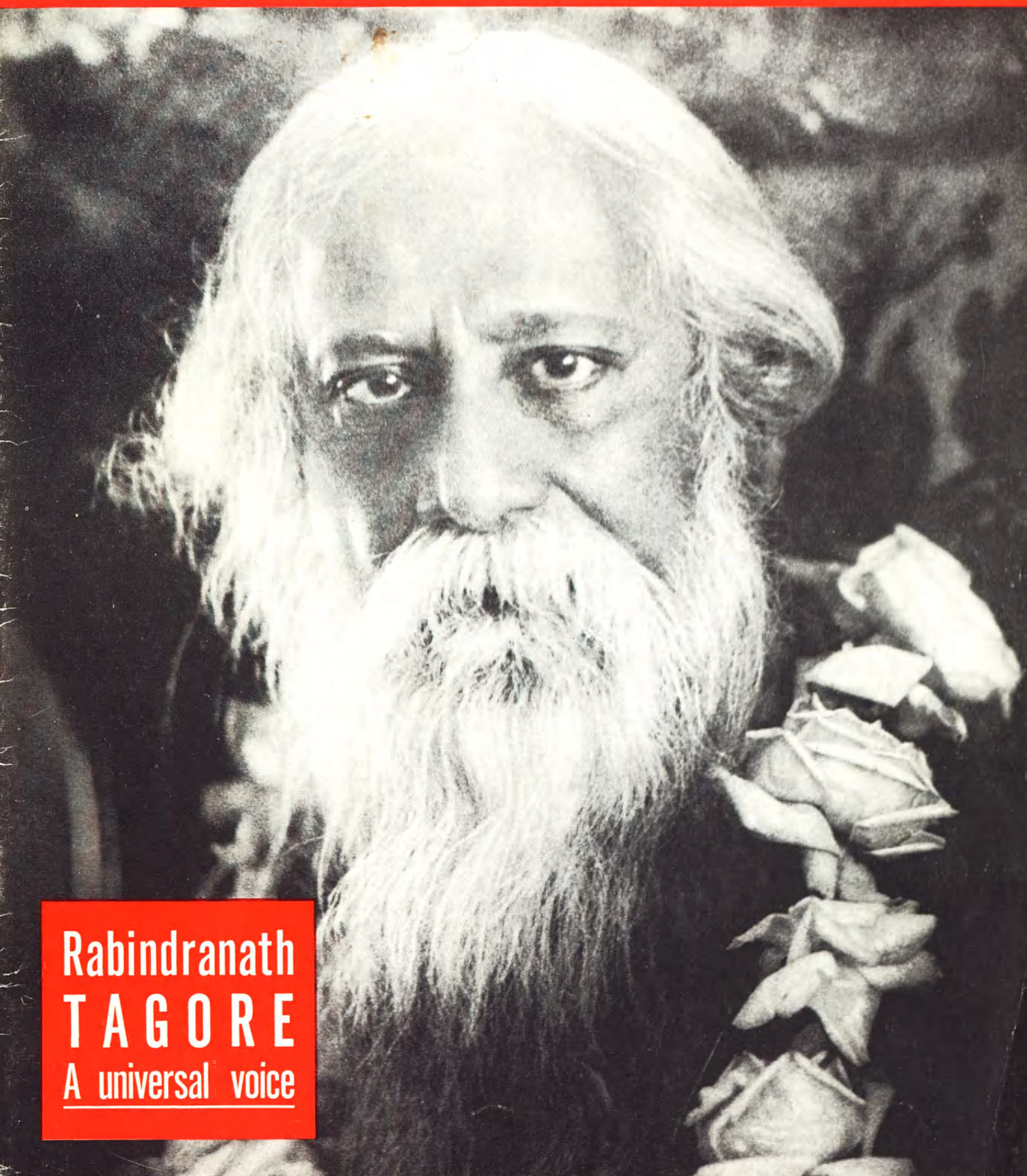

Rabindranath TAGORE

A universal voice

THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE, an illustration from an Ethiopian religious manuscript. The fullest and most varied expression of Ethiopian art is found in the illuminated manuscripts of this African Christian kingdom. Striking examples are now published in a Unesco World Art Series Album (See p. 30).

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DECEMBER 1961
14TH YEAR

Contents

No. 12

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COVER PHOTO

In a long life filled with creative literary and artistic activities and occupations, Rabindranath Tagore also found time for extensive travel as an Ambassador of Goodwill, seeking to promote International understanding. Here, wearing a garland of roses, he was photographed in Teheran, capital of Iran, on the occasion of his 71st birthday, in 1932.

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Page

4 **HOMAGE TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE**
For the 100th anniversary of his birth
By Vittorino Veronese

5 **PORTRAIT OF A MAN**
By Satyajit Ray

12 **REBEL WITH A UNIVERSAL CAUSE**
He named his school "Abode of Peace"
By Humayun Kabir

17 **A LITTLE-KNOWN REALM OF HAUNTING SONGS AND MELODIES**
Tagore, a composer unshackled by tradition
By Philippe Stern & Arnold A. Bake

18 **THE ENCHANTMENT OF LINES**

22 **REVELATIONS OF A NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE**
By Mahmud Shah Qureshi

26 **READINGS FROM TAGORE**

27 **WORLD HOMAGE TO A UNIVERSAL MAN**

28 **THE ART OF ETHIOPIA'S PAINTER-SCRIBES**
A new Unesco art album reveals little-known masterpieces
By Abbé Jules Leroy

30 **THE TUMULTUOUS HISTORY OF ANCIENT NUBIA**
A Soviet archæologist retraces 3,000 years of Nubian history
By Boris Piotrovsky

33 **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

34 **FROM THE UNESCO NEWSROOM**

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A centenary tribute to

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Rabindranath Tagore, philosopher, educator, novelist, poet and painter, is without challenge one of the greatest and most noble figures of modern times. Not only was he awarded the rare honour of the Nobel Prize for Literature, but he also won the distinction far more rare, less spectacular but much more significant, of having his works translated into different languages by writers of equal glory, Nobel Prize winners in their own right, such as André Gide in French and Juan Ramon Jimenez in Spanish.

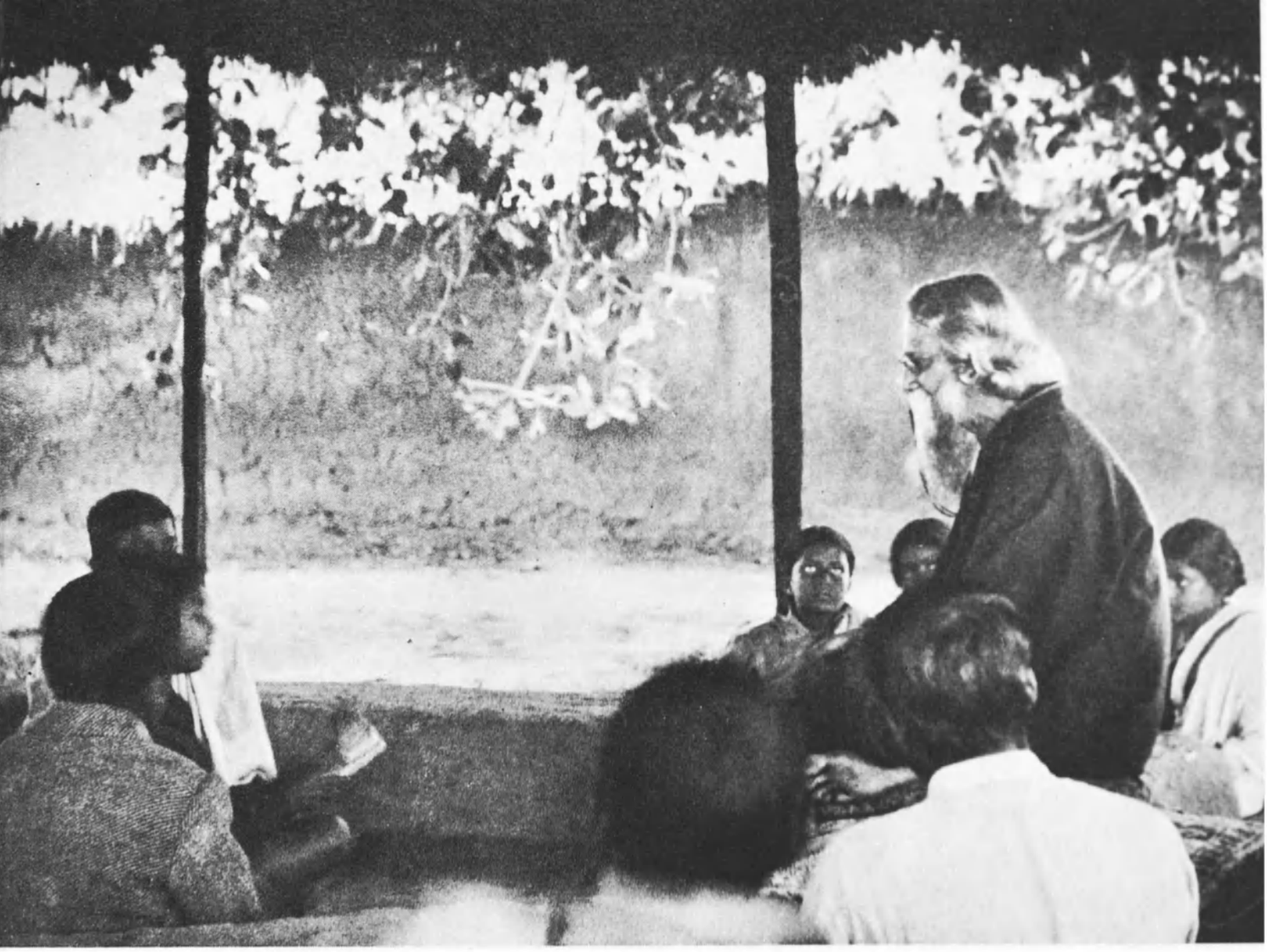
India today does not celebrate merely the thinker and writer. Above all, India reveres Tagore's generous, universal soul, open to the problems not only of his own land but of the world, the son of the Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, who had been one of the guiding spirits of the Brahma-Samaj. For one of his greatest works, the monumental novel *Gora,* Rabindranath was to choose as theme the trials and problems of this movement. It is not merely by chance that Unesco, among its many undertakings towards the celebration of Tagore's Centenary, has decided to publish the first French translation of this very novel. For in this book the poet stresses with great fervour and by moving scenes depicted with all his skill as a writer, his zealous devotion to the ideal of a casteless world, a world without cruel, irrational discrimination between one human being and his fellow men. His hero, Gora, cries out: "It is you who are my mother. The imaginary mother whom I long sought during my wandering and vagabonding was sitting at home, waiting before my own room. You have no caste, you make no distinction between men, you know no hatred, you give flesh to nothing but the good that is in all of us. It is you who are India." And then come these words of Gora, which one might well apply to Tagore himself: "No longer is there opposed within me the Hindu, Moslem and Christian. Today all foods are my food." For indeed, Tagore took nourishment from what all the world had to offer, and his message of mutual understanding and tolerance is directed far beyond the boundaries of India, to all cultures and to all men. A message of freedom too, not merely freedom for oneself, but for all: "He who wishes freedom for himself", he affirmed," yet fears freedom for his neighbour, is not worthy of freedom."

It is only fitting that the entire globe should unite with India in rendering solemn homage to a man whose glory ennobled indissolubly both his own country and the world.

Writing days after Tagore's death in August 1941, Jawaharlal Nehru said : "Both Gurudev and Gandhiji took much from the West and from other countries, especially Gurudev. Neither was narrowly national. Their message was for the world." Tagore was in truth a living link between East and West. And so he willed it. His entire life he fought against narrow distrust of foreign cultures. He had faith in the fruitfulness of cultural intercourse and friendship. With this message he was and remains a Guru to Unesco, and it is both fitting and imperative that Unesco's homage to Tagore should join that of the rest of mankind.

VITTORINO VERONESE

Message from the Director-General of Unesco, to the Tagore Centenary celebrations in Bombay in January.



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RABINDRANATH TAGORE WITH A GROUP OF STUDENTS IN THE SCHOOL HE FOUNDED AT SANTINIKETAN IN 1901.

PORTRAIT OF A MAN

by Satyajit Ray

This year the world celebrates the birth, one hundred years ago, of one of India's greatest figures, Rabindranath Tagore. As part of the commemorations organized in Tagore's honour, the Indian Government asked Satyajit Ray to produce a documentary film on the poet, his background and his contribution to the arts and international understanding. Satyajit Ray is one of India's leading film directors. His best-known film, *Pather Panchali*, received the "Most Human Document" award at the Cannes Film Festival in 1956, and *Aparajito* won the Venice Film Festival grand prize in 1957. THE UNESCO COURIER wishes to thank the Films Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, for permission to reproduce the text of Mr. Ray's commentary for his just completed film. The article below is copyright and may not be reproduced without prior permission.

On August 7, 1941, in the city of Calcutta, a man died. His mortal remains perished, but he left behind him a heritage which no fire could consume.

It was a heritage of words and music and poetry, of ideas and of ideals, and it has the power to move us today and in the days to come.

We, who owe him so much, salute his memory.

Founded in the year 1690 by an Englishman named Job Charnock, the city of Calcutta, one hundred years ago, was a thriving metropolis. As the capital of India, Calcutta was the seat of government.

In the northern part of this sprawling city, in the area known as Jorasanko in Chitpore, was the family residence of the Tagores. The Tagores had an impressive lineage. It dated back to the first group of learned Brahmins that came from Kanauj and settled in Bengal in the 8th century. One thousand years later, Panchanan, a descendant, came to the new city of Calcutta and found a lucrative position with a British shipping company. His grandson Nilmoni added considerably to the family fortune and built the house at Jorasanko in 1789.

The peak was reached, however, with Nilmoni's grandson, Dwarkanath, one of the most brilliant and colourful figures of the 19th century. Dwarkanath Tagore combined cultured sophistication with largeness of heart and a rare degree of business acumen. Coal, sugar, indigo, export, banking, newspapers, there was no end to his enterprise—and he succeeded in all. If his earnings were fabulous, so were his spendings.

Although a Hindu and a Vaishnab, Dwarkanath defied the ban of Brahmin orthodoxy and twice went to England. There he had an audience with Queen Victoria, discussions with Gladstone, and dinner with men like Dickens, Thackeray and Max Muller.

Before his death in England, Dwarkanath had written a letter to his eldest son Debendranath reproving him for neglecting the family's business affairs. For some

CONT'D ON NEXT PAGE

Growing up in a family of scholars and artists

years past, young Debendranath had been developing tendencies which might well have distressed his father.

It began in a burning ghat. The last rites were being administered to Debendranath's grandmother. Not far away, on the river bank, sat Debendranath. Like many a rich man's son, he had been leading a wayward life. But tonight, he was overcome by a strange feeling. Wordly possessions seemed to lose their meaning for him.

This led to a period of profound disquiet, followed by a ceaseless quest for the meaning of existence in the great source books of the East and West. He read the materialist philosophers of modern Europe—Locke, Hume, Bentham and others—whose ideas were so much in vogue among the students of the time. Then he learnt Sanskrit and read the Mahabharata. But peace of mind would not come until one day he chanced upon a torn page of a Sanskrit book. There was a *sloka* in it which said: God is supreme and all-pervading. Be content with what He gives. Do not covet another's wealth.

THIS happened to be a page of the Ishopanishad, edited by Raja Rammohun Roy. Rammohun had been a close friend of Dwarkanath's. As a boy. Debendranath had a deep and silent admiration for the man. But the greatness of the Raja's vision and the magnitude and nobility of the tasks he had set before himself, were beyond the boy's comprehension. The Raja lived in times when India's spiritual heritage was being submerged in ritual and superstition.

Rammohun advocated Western education for Indians because he wanted the new ideas of the West to spread in the country. But he also wanted us to respect what was old and true in our own heritage. His own study of the Upanishads had led him to the monotheistic bases of Hinduism, which he sought to spread through writings and lecturers.

His work was left unfinished by his death in England. And now Debendranath inspired by the two lines of Sanskrit text, went on to prove himself to be his true spiritual son and heir.

Debendranath suffered social ostracism for preaching the monotheistic faith that he called Brahmoism, but to his followers—and there were many—he was Maharshi, the Great Sage.

When Rabindranath was born, the Maharshi was 45 years old. His wife Saradamoni was 33. Rabindranath was the fourteenth child. The eldest was Dwijendranath—poet, philosopher, mathematician. The second son Satyendranath was a Sanskrit scholar who translated the Gita and Meghdoot into Bengali verse, went to England and returned as the first Indian member of the Indian Civil Service. The fifth son Jyotirindranath was a born musician, translated Molière and Sanskrit dramas into Bengali, and wrote and staged some of the most popular Bengali plays of his time. Among the daughters was Swarnakumari, the first woman novelist and the first woman to edit a literary journal in India. Indeed it was a household which hummed with activity.

At the age of seven, Rabi was sent to school. He went to four schools and hated them all. But to say that he lacked education would be wrong, for his third brother, Hemendranath, saw to his studies at home, and it was all done by the clock.

Rabi was 13 when his first book of verse, *Kabikahini*, came out. When Rabi was 16, Dwijendranath brought out a literary magazine called *Bharati*, and Rabi found an admirable platform for his literary activities. His essays included pieces on European poets like Dante and Petrarch whose acquaintance Rabi had already made

CONT'D ON PAGE 8

THE TALENTED FAMILY into which Tagore was born proved a potent factor in the flowering of his genius. His grandfather went to England in defiance of contemporary conventions. His father was a leader of revolt against orthodoxy in his championship of the Brahmo faith and among Rabindranath's brothers and sisters were a scholar, a poet, a musician and the first woman to edit a literary journal in India. It was a household which hummed with activity. Above left,

Rabindranath in 1881, aged 20, in the role of Valmiki in his opera *Valmiki Prativa* (Countenance of the Great Sage Valmiki) at its first performance in the Tagore home in Calcutta. Above, photo taken after a family presentation of Tagore's play, *Phalguni*. From left, Abanindrath, Samarendranath and Gaganendranath, all nephews of Tagore, Willie Pearson, an English friend, and Tagore himself. Below right, Tagore and his bride, Mrinalini Devi. Below, Tagore's parents.

All photos © Rabindra-Sadana, Visva Bharati

Philosopher, educator, novelist, poet & painter

in the library of his elder brother Satyendranath. Satyendranath's wife Gnanadanandini, who had been staying in England with her two children, was a remarkable woman who had been persuaded by her husband to come out of orthodox seclusion. Rabi set out for England in the summer of 1879 and joined Gnanadanandini at Brighton. If the plan was to provide the boy with a proper education, it came to nought. For Rabi returned a year later without completing his course of studies at London University.

While in England, Rabi had become acquainted with Western music. Some of the tunes he had learnt found their way into the enchanting opera *Valmiki-Prativa*. There were other tunes, however, which had their origin in classical Indian ragas, used for the first time in an operatic context.

Valmiki-Prativa was performed in the Tagore residence with Rabindranath himself in the role of the bandit-turned-poet. The rest of the cast too was composed of members of the Tagore family, all gifted with varying degrees of talent.

Among those who saw and praised this performance was the greatest literary figure of the time, Bankim Chandra Chatterji. A year later, when Rabindranath's *Sandhya-Sangeet* was published, Bankimchandra personally congratulated the poet and acknowledged his pre-eminence among the rising writers of the day.

At the age of 22, Rabindranath married Bhabatarini Devi; the old-fashioned name was later changed to Mrinalini. Two months before the wedding Rabindranath had received a letter from his father in which he was asked to prepare himself to look after the family estates. After a period of initial training in the Estate's Offices in Calcutta, Rabindranath found himself in the very heart of rural Bengal, in the area of the river Padma.

With a worldly wisdom unusual in a poet but characteristic of the Tagores Rabindranath in later life set out in a practical way to improve the lot of the poor peasants of his estates and his varied work in this field is on record. But his own gain from this intimate contact with the fundamental aspects of life and nature, and the influence of this contact on his own life and work are beyond measure.

Living mostly in his boat and watching the life through the window, a whole new world of sights and sounds and feelings opened up before him. It was a world in which the moods of people and the moods of nature were inextricably interwoven. The people found room in a succession of great short stories, and nature, in an outpouring of exquisite songs and poems. Dominant was the mood of the rains, exultant and terrible.

In 1901, Rabindranath was 40 years old. His already enormous output of poems and plays had been gathered in one big volume. It comprised 21 books and included *Sonar Tari*, his first masterpiece.

The same year, 1901, marked an event of a somewhat different nature. In 1862, one year after Rabindranath was born, the Maharshi had acquired some property in Bolpur, in the district of Birbhum in West Bengal. The property was made over to a board of trustees, and the deed specified that the place was to be used for meditation on the Supreme Formless Being. According to the Maharshi's wishes, a seat of prayer and a temple of worship had been built, and close to the temple, a residence which was called Santiniketan—the Abode of Peace.

Rabindranath had been worrying about the education of his children, and he decided to start an experimental educational institution in Santiniketan. It was to be a school but not like the schools that had been the nightmare of his own childhood. It was to be like the forest hermitages of classical India.

But to bring it into being was not an easy task. For one thing it cost money and Rabindranath had to sell, among other things, the copyright of his books. His wife added her bit by selling her wedding ornaments. Three months after the school was opened, she was taken ill. Two months later, she died. For Rabindranath it was the beginning of a series of personal tragedies.

Nine months after his wife's death, his second daughter Renuka passed away. The hardest blow of all came four years later. The youngest son Sami, who took after his father in many ways, fell a victim to cholera when he was only 12.

It was in the midst of these bereavements that Rabindranath participated in one of the greatest political upheavals in the history of India. In December 1903 was published the decision of Governor-General Lord Curzon to split up Bengal into two provinces. The idea was to create a separate province with a Moslem majority, which would induce a rift between the two main religious groups and thus avert the possible growth of a united front against the Government.

But in proposing the Partition, Curzon merely fanned the flame of patriotism that had been smouldering in the minds of certain visionaries all through the period of the renaissance in Bengal. These men now came to the fore and led the millions to rise in a protest. The series of stirring patriotic songs which Rabindranath composed for the occasion were sung in processions in the streets of Calcutta with the poet himself in the lead.

On October 27, 1905, the Partition became an accomplished fact. In a form of protest that only a poet could conceive, Rabindranath turned the Black Day into a mass festival of Rakhibandhan—the tying of the band of friendship.

But the Swadeshi movement was fated to grow and assume a character which was not possible to foresee in its early stages. While admitting the bravery and patriotism of those who killed or were killed in a reckless bid for freedom Rabindranath could not condone terrorism. He stated his credo in clear terms. The path of violence was not for India. Good could come only out of constructive work carried out in a spirit of tolerance.

He had himself followed up his retirement from the political scene by undertaking the work of rural welfare in his estates. And there were other activities: he was teaching at school, editing journals, and engaging himself in almost every conceivable form of literary activity.

That his own countrymen now regarded him as their leading man of letters was proved by his 50th birthday celebrations in Calcutta. Sponsored by the Bengal Academy of Letters and attended by thousands, it was a unique literary manifestation in India. But to the outside world, Rabindranath was still an unknown name.

The object of Rabindranath's visit to England in 1912 was to study the educational methods of the West and also to acquaint the West with his work at Santiniketan. He happened to carry with him on this occasion a note book containing his own English translations of some of his poems, mainly from Gitanjali. He showed these translations to the English painter William Rothenstein who had met the poet on an earlier visit to India. Rothenstein was so impressed that he sent a copy of the translation to the great Irish poet William Butler Yeats.

Introducing the poems to a gathering of English writers and intellectuals, Yeats said: "I know of no man in my time who has done anything in the English language to equal these lyrics. Even as I read them in these literal English translations, they are exquisite in style and thought."

Gitanjali was published in England in the same year. There has rarely been another instance of a poet gaining world fame in like manner. The Nobel Prize came in 1913 and knighthood in 1915, while war was raging in Europe. Touring the United States and Japan in 1916, Rabindranath made eloquent appeals for peace. He felt that world peace could be achieved only through

CONT'D ON PAGE 10

KINDRED SPIRITS: In 1921 Tagore met the great French writer and thinker Romain Rolland for the first time. Despite the barriers of language the two men reached such a degree of sympathetic understanding that Tagore wrote to one of his friends: "Of all the men I confronted in the Occident it was Romain Rolland that struck me as the nearest to my heart and the most akin to my spirit." In 1926, when Tagore was again travelling in Europe he sat and talked with Rolland in the latter's garden at Villeneuve in Switzerland where the photo below was taken. Above, Tagore with the famous German theologian and educator, Paul Geheeb, in 1930. Paul Geheeb, who died last year aged 90, founded the Oldenwald School Germany, as well as the Ecole d'Humanité at Goldern, in Switzerland. Paul Geheeb's ideas have inspired educators in many other countries.

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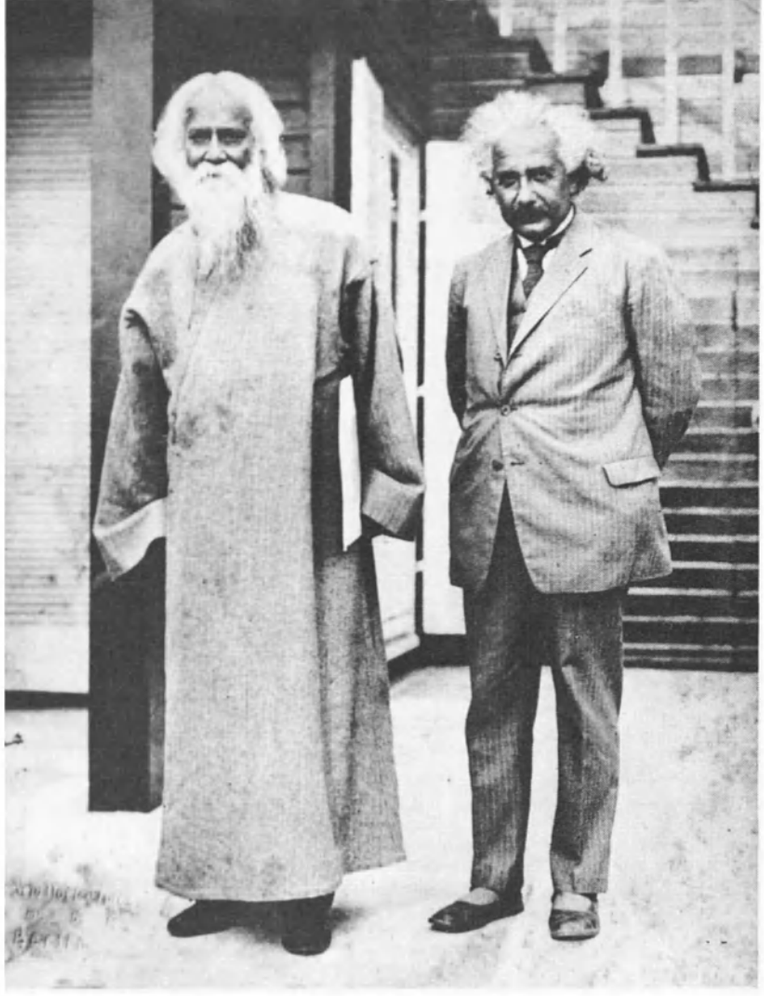

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TWO GREAT MINDS and two great humanists were confronted when Tagore met Albert Einstein during a visit to Berlin in 1930. Tagore's humanist ideas found an echo in the best minds of Europe and some of its great men became his closest friends. Other Europeans came to India and worked devotedly for the poet and his cause.

No nation can be proud of isolating its life & culture

intellectual co-operation between nations. He said, "The call has come to every individual in the present age to prepare himself for the dawn of a new era, when man shall discover his soul in the spiritual unity of all human beings."

Pursuing this noble idea of international co-operation, Rabindranath gave the school at Santiniketan a new status and a new name. "Yatra Visvam Bharati Ekanirham"—Where the world makes home in a single nest—this was the motto of Visvam Bharati, the World University, which was inaugurated in December 1918 with the aged philosopher Brijendranath Seal presiding.

While peace had been restored in Europe, in India there was unrest. The occasion was the Rowlatt Bill, designed to suppress all political movements. It dashed India's hopes of gaining the self-government that the British rulers had kept promising through the war years.

Dominating the Indian political scene at this time was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. As a barrister in South Africa, Gandhi had fought for the rights of the Indians living in that country. As a protest against the Rowlatt Act, Gandhi launched a movement of passive resistance. But the masses misinterpreted the movement and following a rumour of Gandhi's arrest, violence broke out in many parts of the country. As a result of this the Government started taking repressive measures out of all proportion to the magnitude of the violence.

In the Punjab, martial law was declared. In charge of the troops at Amritsar was Brigadier General Dyer. On the first day of the month of Vaisakh, a crowd gathered in Jallianwallabagh, as it had done every other year. It was a peaceful crowd. But Dyer was taking no chances. Machine guns rattled.

The news of the Amritsar incident was suppressed by the Government, but details of it filtered through to other parts of the country and even to the Abode of Peace.

Rabindranath rushed to Calcutta. But the Defence of India Act was still in force and no leaders would support him in a plea for a meeting of protest.

At four o'clock on the morning of May 30, Rabindranath finished writing a letter. It was addressed to the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, and it was published in the newspapers. Condemning the Government for the killing at Jallianwallabagh, Rabindranath concluded by saying: "And I for my part wish to stand, shorn of all special distinctions, by the side of my countrymen who for their so-called insignificance are liable to suffer degradation not fit for human beings. And these are the reasons which have painfully compelled me to ask your Excellency to relieve me of my title of knighthood."

The next ten years of Rabindranath's life were filled with ceaseless activity. The urge to travel, and the necessity to collect funds for his university, took him to all parts of the world and the West as much as the East, welcomed him with open arms.

Wherever he went, he spread the message of peace and stressed the importance of intellectual co-operation between nations. He said: "We ought to know that isolation of life and culture is not a thing of which any nation can be proud. In the human world, giving is exchanging, it is not one-sided."

His great humanist ideas found an echo in the best minds of Europe, and some became his close friends.

In the meanwhile, the institution at Santiniketan had come a long way from its modest beginnings. Its scope for studies had greatly increased. There was Kalabhawan for the study of painting, under masters like Nandalal Bose, who was himself a pupil of Abanindranath,

Official Soviet Photos

THE QUEST for the unity of man in the midst of diversity led Tagore to travel to the farthest corners of the world. "Uniformity is not unity," he once said; "only those who are different can unite. Nations that wipe out the independence of other nations are the destroyers of interdependance.". He was the first great Indian in recent times to embark on a cultural mission for restoring contacts and establishing friendship with peoples of other countries. Above, in 1930, Soviet citizens gather to greet Tagore in Moscow and youngsters crowd around him as he visits a centre of the "Pioneers" children's organization.

a nephew of the poet. The Sangeet Bhawan which neglected no brand of Indian music had also grown under Dinendranath, another of the poet's nephews. Special provisions had been made for conducting oriental studies, and scholars came from abroad and stayed to lecture for study and research. Such men were Moriz Winternitz from Austria, Sylvain Levi from France, Victor Lesny from Austria, and Sten Konow from Norway.

But there were some Europeans who did even more than that. Charles Freer Andrews, a missionary who was present at Yeats' reading of Gitanjali, and William Winstanely Pearson, who had also met the poet in England, came to the Ashram in its early days—drawn by the poet's personality—and stayed on until their death, working with a selfless devotion to the poet and his cause that few Indians could equal. Leonard Elmhirst was another Englishmen who was drawn by the poet's personality, came over to Santiniketan and took charge of the Santiniketan at Surul, two miles away.

The poet's last European tour began with a visit to Oxford where he delivered the series of Hibbert lectures which were later published as *The Religion of Man.*

It was also on this last tour that Rabindranath went to Soviet Russia for the first time. On the eve of his departure from Moscow he told his hosts: "You have recognized the truth that in extirpating all special evils one has to go to the root, and the only way to it is through education." In Russia as well as in other places that he visited on this tour, Rabindranath held exhibitions of his paintings. At the age of 70, Rabindranath had found a new outlet for his creative urge.

In 1931, the leading citizens of Calcutta united in an appeal to observe the poet's 70th birthday. It was celebrated in a manner that was truly worthy of the occasion. The Golden Book of Tagore was a testimony to the love and reverence that the intellectuals of the world bore for the poet. Its sponsors consisted of three Europeans and two Indians. There was Romain Rolland from France, Albert Einstein from Germany, and the poet Kostes Palamas from Greece. One of the two Indians was the scientist Jagadish Chandra Bose, the other was Mahatma Gandhi.

The last years of the poet's life were spent largely in his beloved Santiniketan. He had a choice of small houses built for him, for he never liked to stay in the same house, or even in the same room for long. It was in a way symbolic of the refusal to get into a rut which had marked his whole life. In his writings he was now producing some of his most mature, original and striking works, and these included text books and nonsense rhymes for children, not an unusual occupation for someone who had loved and understood children all his life and done so much to mould them for a better future. His health was failing but calls of duty, which he was ever ready to answer, gave him little rest.

On May 7, 1941, Radindranath was 80 years old. Three months later, he was to leave the Ashram, never to return. He would be taken to his ancestral house in Calcutta, fatally ill.

Rabindranath attended his 80th birthday celebrations in Santiniketan in spite of his failing health. For the occasion, he had composed a message—his last message to the world. It was called Crisis in Civilization. It concerned itself with the state of the so-called modern civilization, a civilization that was being shaken to its very roots by barbaric wars of aggression.

In the course of the message, Rabindranath said: "I had at one time believed that the springs of civilization could issue out of the heart of Europe. But today, when I am about to leave the world, that faith has deserted me. I look around and see the crumbling ruins of a proud civilization strewn like a vast heap of futility. And yet, I shall not commit the previous sin of losing faith in Man. I shall await for the day when the holocaust will end and the air will be rendered clean with the spirit of service and sacrifice. Perhaps that dawn will come from this horizon, from the East, where the sun rises. On that day will unvanquished man retrench his path of conquest, surmounting all barriers, to win back his lost human heritage."

STELE UNDER A TREE with Tagore, at the age of 44, seated beside it, marks the lonely spot where his father stopped to meditate while going on a pilgrimage towards the Himalayas. Here years later, Tagore created his experimental school which won world renown as Santiniketan—the Abode of Peace.

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He named his school 'Abode of Peace'

REBEL WITH A UNIVERSAL CAUSE

by Humayun Kabir

TAGORE believed—and everyone who ponders the question must believe with him—that education is the foundation of society; that the teachers of today are the arbiters of the destiny of society of tomorrow and the day after. How men are trained, what ideals they imbibe: what type of character they develop, what knowledge is imparted to them: what are the disciplines through which they go; what is the way in which their mind is formed—these are the things which ultimately shape the destinies of man.

Tagore's ideal of education was at the same time revolutionary and traditional. He had the wisdom to see that revolutions are successful only if they grow out of the past. A revolution which seeks to break away completely from the past, a revolution which totally denies tradition, ultimately defeats itself. Revolutions are successful only when values of the past are rediscovered and reshaped to meet the needs of changing times.

Tagore was an educational revolutionary in both theory and practice. His own experience—he left off formal schooling quite early in life—convinced him that the routine of the school, in particular the dull imposition of textbooks and subjects in which the child is not interested, is more a hindrance than a help to the unfoldment of its spirit. He realized that the child's mind does not blossom in that way. From his own experience Tagore learnt that education divorced from social life and cultural traditions, and, more important still, bereft of contacts with nature became for the child an imposition and a burden.

Tagore held that education must allow the child to develop in the context of nature. He believed that the sweep of the earth and the expanse of the sky, the quietness of the evening and the promise of the morning, the beauty of the stars and the radiance of the sun must permeate the personality of the child. Gradually they must become a part of his being so that there may be harmony in his inner nature as there is harmony in the outside world.

Tagore knew that there are plenty of clashes and conflicts in life, but he held that there is a larger harmony in which the smaller clashes and conflicts always find reconciliation. We must strive to attain the same harmony among our faculties. Tagore taught that the intellect should be developed along with the emotions and

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HUMAYUN KABIR is minister for Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs of the Government of India and a former Minister for Civil Aviation. A distinguished writer and educator, Professor Kabir was president of the All-India Education Conference in 1955 and of the Indian Philosophical Congress. All-India Writer's Convention in 1956. His many works include : Men and Rivers, The Indian Heritage, Education in New India, Science, Democracy and Islam, *and* Immanuel Kant.

CONT'D ON NEXT PAGE

Far-seeing pioneer of modern education

the volition, and all these aspects should grow harmoniously through activity of many kinds.

Tagore did not believe in any narrow or rigid educational formulae. His conception of education was in broad human terms. In his system, art had its place along with mathematics and science. He believed, and he tried to carry out his beliefs in his school, that all aspects of the child's personality must develop harmoniously. He was one of the earliest among modern educational thinkers to emphasive activity as an essential principle of education.

Many of his ideals have been shared by educational thinkers in all countries of the world, but Tagore's special contribution lay in the emphasis on harmony, on balance, on all-sided development of the human personality. He felt that if any aspect was submerged, it would warp the entire human outlook. For Tagore beauty had to be moral, and morality had to be imbued with the spirit of beauty. The pursuit of truth, beauty and goodness was the end of human life and the purpose of education was to train men and women to seek, recognize and achieve them.

Tagore established Santiniketan as a school in 1901. He started with hardly a dozen pupils and one of them was his own son. It was natural that Tagore's son should come to study in his own school, for he was not one of those educational politicians who talk much about new systems but send their own children to traditional schools. Tagore's son came to Santiniketan because Tagore believed in it, but some of the other pupils came because they had proved misfits in the existing schools. In the beginning, recruits to Tagore's school were sometimes the neglected children of the family, and yet these very children have turned out to be some of the most distinguished sons of modern India. In its short life of sixty years Santiniketan has given us a Chief Justice of India, Chief Ministers and Minister of States and Judges of the High Courts, great educationists, scientists, artists and philosophers.

TAGORE believed that every individual has in him or her the seed of divinity. Every man has the promise of greatness if only we know how to develop his potentiality. Santiniketan has justified his faith and proved that if the educational approach be right and imaginative, and if there be a spirit like Tagore's to inspire and guide, there is no height that the individual may not reach. It is only because we do not recognize our powers, only because we allow our personality to be warped by lesser considerations, that human beings do not grow. One word of caution is however necessary. A Socrates or a Kalidasa, an Ibn Khalidun or a Rabindranath Tagore is rare, even in the best of circumstances but given the proper education and environment, everyone can become a useful and creative member of the community, a member who contributes as much as he receives, a citizen of whom any country can be proud.

These are the educational ideals which Tagore preached; the ideal of harmony among the different subjects, of harmony among all aspects of the personality, with a proper emphasis on emotions, intellect and volition of harmony of man with nature. These ideals of Tagore are now the common currency of the educational world. I have sometimes felt that if Tagore had only formulated his educational ideals and carried them out in Santiniketan, he would have been honoured as one of the greatest educational thinkers the world has known in the last 100 years.

Tagore did not believe in blind conformity. He always protested against what he called *Achalayatan*, the institution which has become immobile, customs that have become out-moded, beliefs that have become dead. Schools which do not allow the free development of the mind were for him prison houses and not centres of light. Tagore revolted against rigidity and believed that it is only through change, only through a forward march that the values of the spirit can be maintained.

Every country, every community has its own peculiar culture, its own peculiar needs. Every age, every period has its own requirements. Tagore held that our programmes must change with changing times. Values are eternal but their expression in institutions, traditions and practices must change if we are to remain true to their spirit.

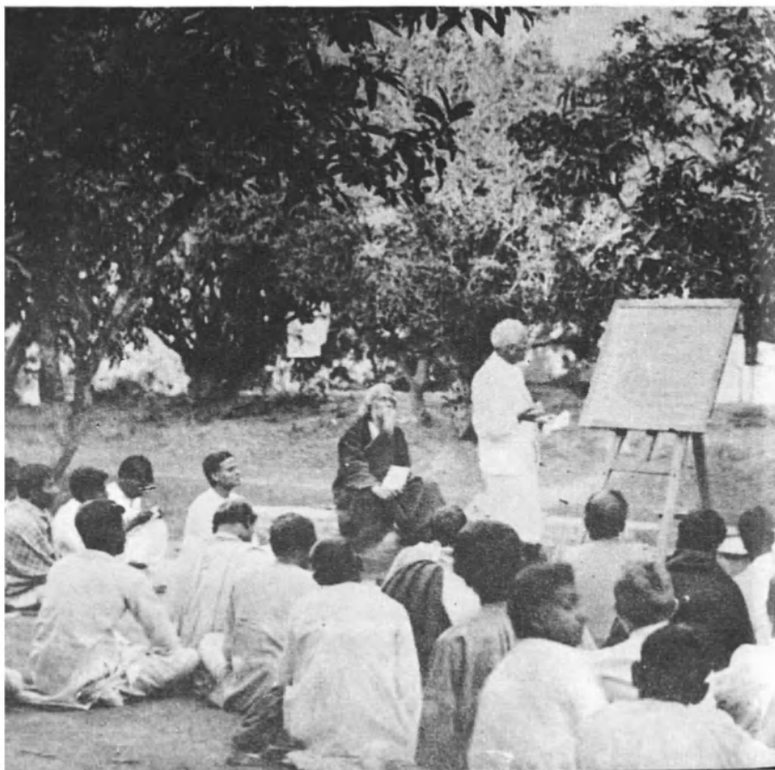
One of the things of which modern India is proud, one of the things in which we have great hopes—pride in what has been achieved, hopes in the promise they hold —is what we call the community development programme. This programme has become a symbol of hope in our villages, and it is not accidental that it flows out of what Tagore taught and did. More than sixty years ago, Tagore said that the greatest misfortune of modern India is that *Shree* (grace and beauty) has left the villages.

Modern culture has become predominantly urban. The very word "civilization" suggests that it has always had something to do with cities,, but in the modern age concentration on cities has become even greater. Throughout the world there is today a drift of the abler and more enterprising men and women, men and women of will and vision, away from rural areas to the towns. In consequence, village life becomes steadily more impoverished and the gap between the town and the village continually grows. In spite of the admonitions of many great men—of Ruskin some 100 years ago, and of Tolstoy, and Gandhi in the present century—nobody goes back to the village.

Tagore saw the answer to their problem more than sixty years ago. He said that this vicious circle can be broken not by admonitions, not by speaking in lyric terms about the beauties of village life, but by improving the villages till they again become the home of culture and grace. If we can change the pattern of rural life and make the villages more like towns, if the great gap which exists today between village and town is gradually overcome, then and then only will the drift to the town stop.

Villages today do not have the health services, the communication and the social amenities and the hundreds of other things which make the town such an attractive place for young men and women. Tagore said that able men will stay in villages only when village life is reconstructed to provide educational facilities, health services, improved communications and adequate and wholesome water supply. Able men and women will stay in the villages only if there are opportunities for the fullest development of their personality. The pro-

TAGORE'S BELIEF that education is the foundation of society led him in 1901 to create an experimental school at Santiniketan. It was given a new status and a new name—Visva Bharati, the World University—in 1918. Below, Sylvain Levy, the French orientalist and close friend of Tagore, lecturing at Santiniketan in 1923, with Tagore listening intently in the background.



gramme of rural reconstruction that India has undertaken today, the community development programme which is being accepted also by other countries of the world, is a direct outcome of Tagore's teaching.

It is I think true to say that after 3,000 years, the Indian village is today on the march. For almost 3,000 years our agriculture had hardly changed, our ways of living in the villages had hardly changed, and the little changes that had taken place were often for the worse. 6,000 years ago we had in India the great civilization of Harappa and Mohenjo Daro. This civilization was marked by a pattern of planned towns with planned streets and drainage which would compare favourably with some of the most modern towns of Western Europe and America. But during the last 3,000 years something happened which changed things for the worse. We in India lost that knowledge and energy so that today conditions of sanitation in rural areas are such that the less we speak about them the better.

VILLAGE housing is so poor that we are ashamed of it. Roads, water supply and other social services in the villages are completely inadequate. Misery and squalor, poverty, ignorance and disease continued for over 3,000 years, but in the course of the last ten years—since India became free—a massive effort is being made to remove these evils. We are today seeking to revive the old spirit of initiative and enterprise and bring back conditions of new life to rural areas. We aim to bring water to villages where there was no supply before, to transform old and traditional methods of agriculture and develop new roads and civic centres, in a word, build a new system of rural economy and rural life.

It will come as a surprise to many that this is a programme which Tagore spelled out some 60 years ago. Sixty years ago, around Santiniketan where he started his school, he drew up the first blueprint for the reconstruction of village life. And it is remarkable that he sought to carry out the programme by evoking the interest and the initiative of the villages himself. The work which began on a very small scale grew till in 1921 it developed into the Rural Institute at Sriniketan through the help and co-operation of an enlightened English friend and admirer.

Even before the advent of the twentieth century, Tagore had declared that there can be no question of economic regeneration or political freedom for India, there can be no question of raising the standard of life of the people and building a new humanity in India, unless the villages changed. He pleaded that we must create conditions so that the villages may again become creative, and rural people find satisfaction in life. He pointed out that there is a close link between economic and cultural life, between political and moral urges.

The Indian people will again become creative only when their social and economic problems have been solved. Tagore declared that political bondage is merely an external symptom of an inner disease. He held that it is a mistake to fight political bondage on a merely political programme. Such attempts, he said, are doomed to fail.

When Indians regain their character and develop moral purpose and aesthetic perceptions, when they begin to strive for economic self-sufficiency and personal dignity, political bondage will drop like the slough off the snake's back when the winter is past.

I wish to refer to one other element in Tagore's economic ideal. He was no obscurantist and knew that the day of the machine had come. He loved handicrafts and knew that some of the most beautiful things have been made by manual labour, but he also knew that in the modern world, there is no alternative to the machine if we are to provide necessary goods and services for millions of human beings. All that Tagore wanted was that the machine must be the slave of man, not his master. Subject to this condition, he accepted the machine freely and without any mental reservation.

The economic pattern which one is seeking to develop in India today is in conformity with this ideal of Tagore. It is an economic pattern in which heavy industry will grow side by side with consumer industries, a pattern in which certain trades, certain industries will be under public control and management, but side by side there will be other spheres of economic activity where private enterprise will have freedom and initiative.

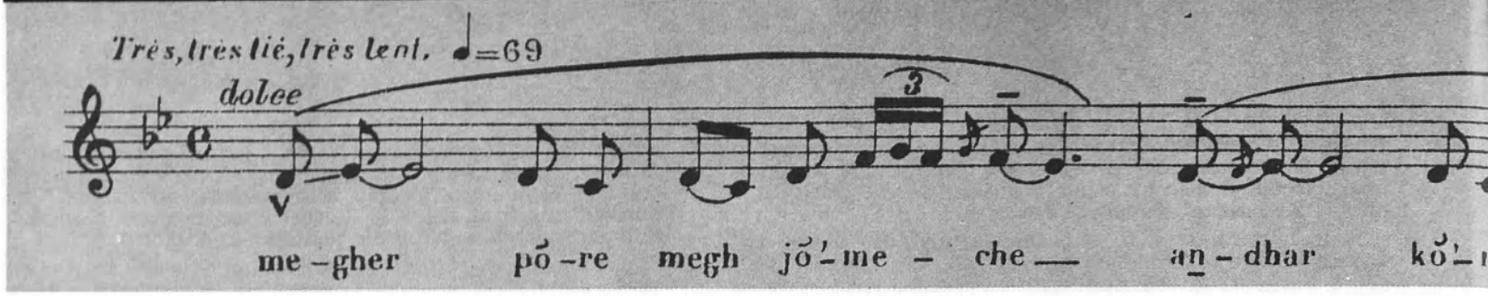
Tagore is largely responsible for the growth of a universal outlook in modern India. We live in an age when great differences divide great nations, when sharp conflicts reach down to the bases of society, when philosophical, religious and moral differences threaten the future of man. Catastrophe can be averted only if we learn to tolerate differences and develop an attitude of respect for and acceptance of diversity and change. Borrowing the language of Buddhism, we have called the principle underlying such an attitude the principle of *Panchsila*. We may call it co-operation, we may call it co-existence, but in fact it is nothing but another name for the basic principle of federalism, in which there is recognition of the dignity of every unit and of loyalty to the whole based on loyalty to the unity of society.

(Address delivered in Rome in June, 1961.)

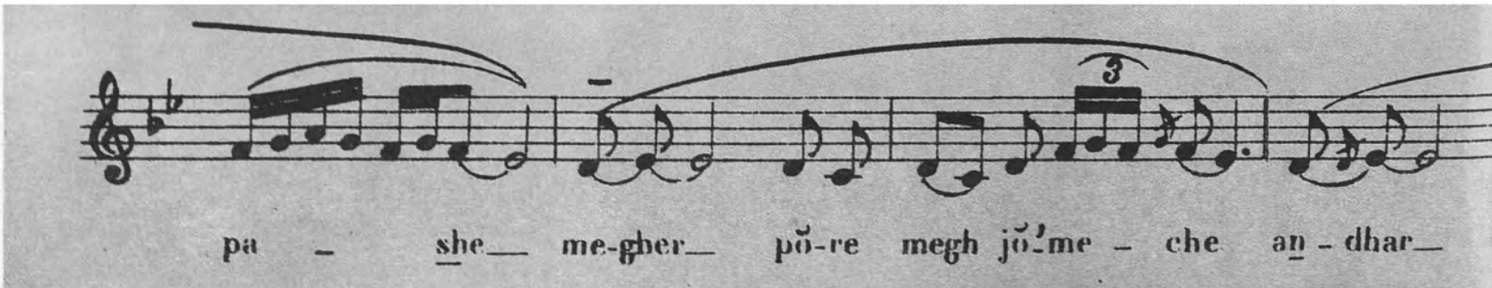
GANDHI AND TAGORE differed greatly in physical appearance, personal habits and in general outlook. At several moments of crisis in India's political history, the two had disagreed over the course of action to be taken. But these were on the surface; their deeper affinity transcended all occasional barriers. Below, Mahatma Gandhi is received by Tagore at Santiniketan in 1940.

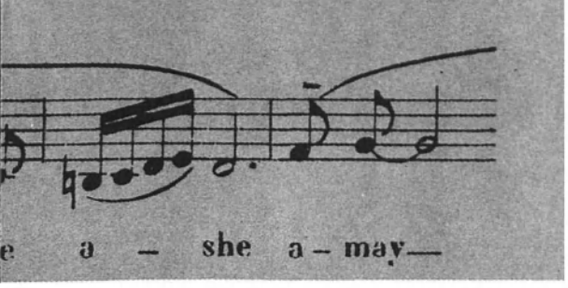
© Rabindra-Sadana, Visva Bharati

Courtesy Christine Bossenec



In the role of the blind singer in his play "Phalguni" (Cycle of Spring), Tagore plays an Indian stringed instrument. Top of page and below, extracts from score of one of Tagore's songs with Bengali lyrics taken from the volume called "Twenty-six songs of R. Tagore" prepared, by Arnold A. Bake and Philippe Stern and published by Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, Paris 1953.





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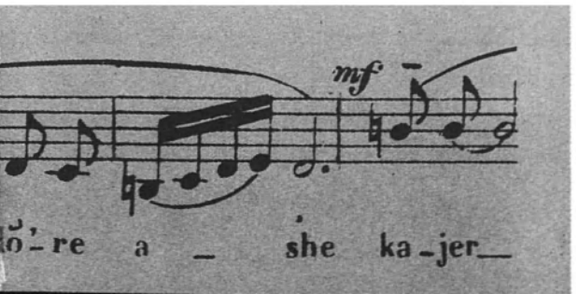

A LITTLE-KNOWN REALM OF HAUNTING SONGS AND MELODIES

by Philippe Stern and Arnold A. Bake

It is not always known in the West that Tagore was not only a poet, but a musician as well. In his work, indeed, poetry and music cannot be separated. Songs form an important part of his creative work and in these words and melody complete each other.

In his *Reminiscences*, he writes: "...I am always reluctant to publish books of the words of my songs, for therein the soul must needs be lacking." And again, speaking of a Baul song: "Besides, the best part of a song is missed when the tune is absent, for thereby its movement and its colour are lost and it becomes like a butterfly whose wings have been plucked." (*Indian Folk Religion. Creative Unity.*)

Tagore's works have reached us without the music, and moreover the original has been modified. The "Poet," as his disciples called him, did not think it necessary to preserve in the English version composed by himself the repetitions and refrains which give so much charm to the Bengali text. He has rendered the ideas to the neglect of the spontaneity, the directness and vitality of their original form.

From the musical point of view, Tagore stands at the meeting-place of three different influences: that of European music, that of classical Hindu music (an extremely sophisticated one, bound by strict rules) and thirdly that of the popular religious music of Bengal.

It is not without a struggle that Tagore managed to throw off the influence both of European and of classical Indian music, so that he might immerse himself in the popular music of his own country and pick up the great mystical traditions of Bengal which are carried on in his own work.

One has only to glance at his *Reminiscences* to feel the musical atmosphere in which he was steeped. Indians of traditionalist tendencies appreciated music, but its practice was looked down on and left to professionals. Not so however in the vast home of the Tagore family. One of the family wrote books on music, the father of the poet composed religious chants, and one of his brothers a national hymn. Another brother, Jyotirindra, used to remain for days at the piano, arranging the old classical melodies, according to his fancy, while the poet and a friend endeavoured to compose lines to these same tunes (*Reminiscences*).

PHILIPPE STERN, Chief Curator of the Musée Guimet in Paris, is an archæologist who, after a meeting with Tagore, became intensely interested in his music and prepared, with Arnold Bake, a volume called "Twenty-Six Songs of Rabindranath Tagore" (Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, Paris), from the text of which this article has been adapted. ARNOLD BAKE, of the Netherlands, is a noted Orientalist and professor of Sanskrit at London University.

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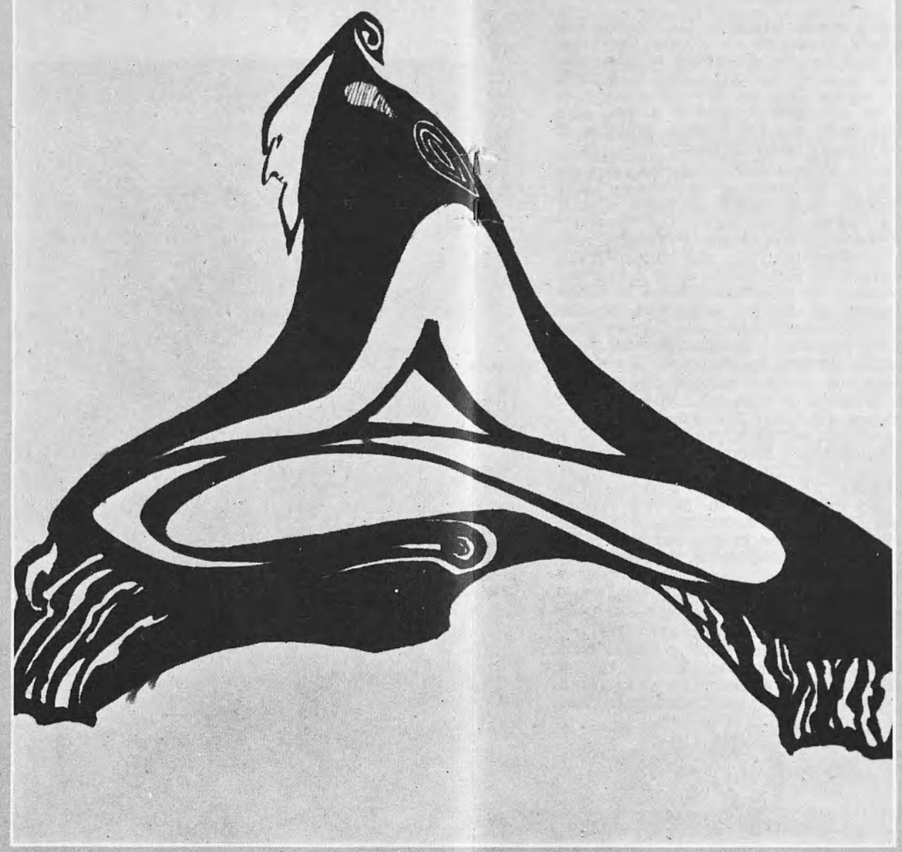
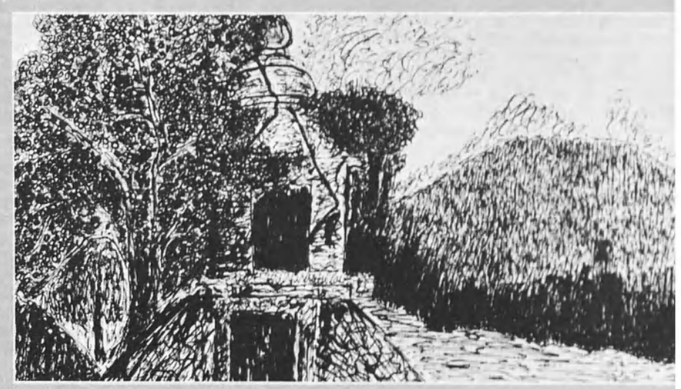
THE ENCHANTMENT OF LINES





Illustrations © Rabindra-Sadana, Visva Bharati

"People often ask me about the meaning of my pictures", wrote Rabindranath Tagore. "I remain silent even as my pictures are. It is for them to express not to explain. They have nothing ulterior behind their own appearance for the thoughts to explore and words to describe and if that appearance carries its ultimate worth then they remain, otherwise they are rejected and forgotten even though they may have some scientific truth or ethical justification". In 1928, at the age of 67, Tagore, to use his own words, "fell under the enchantment of lines" when he discovered that his hand was moving automatically across the pages of his manuscripts transforming the scratches and erasures into designs. For the next 12 years of his life he gave full rein to this irresistible urge and produced nearly 2,000 paintings. Although he used all kinds of paints and produced coloured chalk drawings, pastels, and later dry-points and etchings, Tagore's preferred medium was liquid colour. He often used ordinary fountain-pen ink and when this was not available, he crushed flower petals and used them as pigments. He rarely used a brush, disdained an artist's palette and instead, worked with a cloth soaked in colour, the back of a fountain-pen, his thumb, a stick or, more often, a knife. As these illustrations show, Tagore's art was peculiarly his own, and though he held his first exhibition in 1930, Rabindranath Tagore the Painter has until recently remained practically unknown. (An illustrated article on his work figured in the issue of The Unesco Courier, "Famous Authors as Artists", in August 1957).

 (Cont'd from page 16)

Musician unshackled by tradition

Young Rabindranath also tried to set to music the poems of Chakravarti whose enthusiasm and creative joy were such that "the expressiveness of his voice made up for what it lacked in execution." And "on moonlight nights, pacing round and round the extensive terrace overlooking the river," Rabindranath Tagore composed for the first time melodies for his own songs. He had had no technical training in music. Urged by their youthful enthusiasm and curiosity, immersed in this musical atmosphere, nothing seemed impossible to the poet and his companions: they wrote, sang and acted plays.

European influences were welcome in those days. Whereas today the striving is against external influences and towards a national culture, it was against a narrow and oppressive traditionalism that certain liberal, rich and respected families like the Tagores rose up in those days. European harmonization, damaging to Indian music because it distorts it, was for instance, applied to certain songs of the poet's father by one of the latter's granddaughters, who was given a diamond pin as a reward, such was his satisfaction. Rabindranath had sung foreign airs at school without understanding them; later, as a youth, he sang Beethoven's "Adelaide." When he came back from a visit to England, where he had been interested in, though a little disappointed by, Irish melodies, his manner of singing had become so westernized that his familiy exclaimed in astonishment: "What is the matter with Rabi's voice? How funny and foreign it sounds!"

Tagore was now entering his twentieth year. The melodies he inserted for the first time in one of his dramas *Valmiki Prativa*, and which were so essential to it, that speaking of them in his complete works, the author declared one could not judge the play without them, were thus the result of the most varied influences, some being built on a classical mode, others composed by his brother Jyatirindra, and finally some being of European origin.

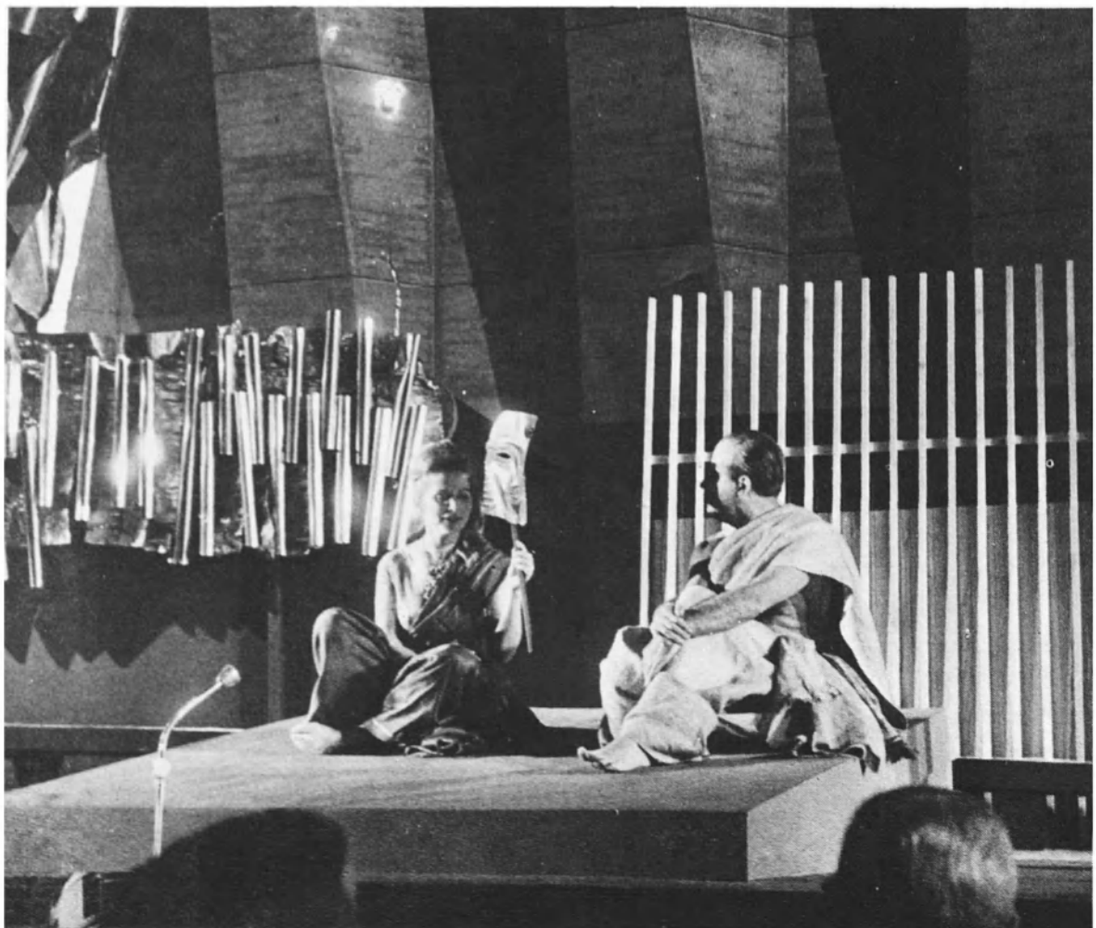
Later however, Tagore's powerful personality asserted itself, and he threw off both the Western influences of his childhood and youth and that of Indian classical music. Western influence still appears fleetingly in his songs, but so intimately blended with Indian melodic phrases that their tonality is not altered, only enriched with a novel hue. It should be noted that Tagore never liked polyphonic music.

As for classical Indian music, which is itself connected with Mohammedan music, Tagore never followed the strict rules which bind the musician in a network of precepts. This often compels the creative faculty, bound in a rigid frame, to develop in depth. But on the other hand it may lead—especially at the present day—to a dry, stiff and lifeless form which turns the remarkable qualities of classical Indian music into as many failings.

Ornaments, beautiful in themselves, and necessary to monodic music, abound to the point of suffocating both words and melody; flexible and varied rhythms detach themselves from the whole and focus the interest, becoming the pretext for a contest between the drummer and the musician he is accompanying; the râgas, which gave such moving effects of atmosphere and colour by their strict scales, by their few dominant notes, by other notes which are left out or lightly suggested, by the differences between their ascending and descending movements, by their prescribed ornaments and progressions, now sometimes became a tyranny.

Being connected with the hours of the day or the seasons, with certain feelings, or even with visual forms, these imperative formulæ gradually became little more than the pretext for a certain virtuosity, that of unlimited development within a stereotyped frame. In this classical music, composer and performer no longer seem to exist separately. The musician receives and observes the traditional outlines, and his task is to develop them, recreate them, and enrich them with his improvisations. His pride therein is legitimate, for in this art which is never rejuvenated and never written down, he represents the whole value of music.

Tagore's achievement as regards the classical music has been, as with everything else, that of breaking fetters. His whole life-work is imbued with that appeal to freedom and simplicity, to the spontaneous and youthful *élan* which no convention can bind. The things to be destroyed are the hollow forms and the veneration given to them. Hence the wrath of the old-fashioned musicians



MUSICAL DRAMA. Rabindranath Tagore grew up in a home whose atmosphere was inherently musical and all his work is imbued with melody, harmony and rhythm. It has even been said that a play by Tagore is little more than a setting for his songs, of which he wrote more than 2,000. Left and right, scenes from *Chitra*, one of Tagore's great dramatic masterpieces, which was presented with special musical accompaniment at Unesco House last year, in a new French translation by Georges Fradier.

Photos D. Berretty-Unesco

brought up against a new kind of music which does not pretend to replace their own, but which introduces the composer as quite distinct from the performer, which rejects rigid rules, and reverts to the simple melodic contour of popular song that the professional musicians held in such scorn.

In his reaction against both classical Indian and Western music, Tagore finds his source of inspiration in the mystic poetry and folk-songs of Bengal. Thus he never was the "creator ex nihilo" that the Western world sometimes imagines him to be. To see him as he really is, rooted in his own soil, steeped in an age-long popular tradition which culminates with him, is not to belittle him.

In Tagore's music can be found certain modes and certain râgas; these he sometimes uses so fantastically that he scandalizes the votaries of classical Indian music.

His style is a simple one, and yet the melodic contour is not harsh. It is softened by numerous ornamentations: guttural sounds, light, barely suggested *appogiature* and discreet *portandos*. These never obscure or clog up the musical phrase, but rather emphasize it by rendering it softer and more pliable.

Equally simple are his rhythms, especially as compared with those of classical Indian music or Kirtan, and they seem to grow ever simpler as Tagore finds himself. They are strict, flexible, and the beat is usually marked by a snap of the fingers which is the only accompaniment of this delicate music.

Music plays a great part in Tagore's life. In his *Reminiscences* he recalls his childhood and youth steeped in music, of long hours spent in a drifting boat while the poet sang and his brother accompanied him on the violin, of days spent at the piano or on the terraces, composing songs.

In his later years, he found the same atmosphere at Santiniketan, the school he founded to give a simple, human education in contact with nature. Here the day began and ended with the singing of Tagore's poems by choirs of children. Other songs celebrated festivals. At the frequent evening gatherings music had the place of honour.

The Bengali system of notation is a recent and incomplete one, what it conveys by means of letters is the mere skeleton of a song; the ornamentations and details are practically left out; it is little more than a memorandum which can only be of use to one who is already familiar with the melody. Oral tradition alone ensures the survival of songs. Tagore knew his memory to be poor and sometimes he even wished to forget previous works so as to be free to create fresh ones; therefore when he had composed a new song, he used to sing it to his nephew Dinendranath, thanks to whose excellent memory the song was saved from oblivion. Sometimes the poet had to learn his own songs afresh from Dinendranath, whom he called "the treasure house of all my songs." (Cycle of Spring.)

Tagore was quite conscious of the value of his own musical compositions. "I have introduced," he once said "some new elements in our music, I know. I have composed five hundred new tunes, perhaps more. This is a parallel growth to my poetry. Anyhow, I love this aspect of my activity. I get lost in my songs and then I think that those are my best work; I get quite intoxicated. I often think that, if all my poetry is forgotten, my songs will live with my countrymen, and have a permanent place... All the same, I know the artistic value of my songs. They have a great beauty. Though they will not be known outside my province, and much of my work will gradually be lost, I leave them as a legacy," wrote Rabindranath Tagore.

A play by Tagore is often little more than a setting for the songs. The very titles of his books often suggest music, for instance "Sharps and Flats."

As often in Asian music, the songs of Tagore will not suffer harmonization. The most important things they offer, it seems, are continuity of melodic line, delicacy, suppleness, intervals other than those of the temperate scale, inflections drawn out which melt into tenderness, nostalgia (of which Krishna's far-off flute is the poetic symbol). Everything which contributes to their value is destroyed if they are encased in the frame of too simple a rhythm, too much cut-up, with too insistent a beat, if they are to become mechanical in order to give them emphasis.

It is thus my fervent hope that a tradition will remain which will keep alive for us—sung by a single voice and practically without accompaniment—the tenderness, the supple, delicate and penetrating nostalgic charm of Tagore's real songs, perhaps the most precious, moving part of his work.

Bronze bust of Tagore made by Jacob Epstein.

© H. Roger Viollet, Paris

REVELATIONS OF A NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE

by Mahmud Shah Qureshi

AMONG the modern thinkers of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent Tagore is undoubtedly the most widely known to Western intellectuals. The reason is obvious: he himself translated his exquisite thought into English just as other writers rendered it in divers tongues.

The award to him of the Nobel Prize in 1913 was probably of little importance in the West, but for the Oriental intelligentsia its effect was considerable. It was not Tagore—a poet of the East or of Asia, of India or of Bengal—who was honoured, but rather a regional literature which, although the most developed among its Indian contemporaries, remained unnoticed by the world until this dramatic recognition of its maturity.

In fact, since the early nineteenth century Bengal spurred by the impact of Western civilization was heading towards a Renaissance, reflected particularly in its literature. Now, after eight-hundred years of a predominantly agrestic character, Bengali literature acquired a fresh sophistication.

The literary efforts of Ishwarchandra Vidyasager, Michael Madhusudhan Dutt, Dinabandhu Mitra, Tekchand Thakur, Bankimchandra Chatterji and Mir Musharraf Hussain not only satisfied the new Bengal middle class but are still regarded as the classics of its literature.

Bengal had already adopted Western literary forms which it employed to give a new vitality to Indian thought. Born in one of the families of Calcutta which was active in furthering this Renaissance, Tagore directly understood that it was his task to create a synthesis between old and new, between Eastern thought and Western expression. This mission he brilliantly discharged.

THE living avatar of the Bengali Renaissance, Tagore naturally drew his inspirations from its old literature, from its religious and folk songs and Sanskrit classics, but he also remained assiduously aware of modern Western thought.

What did Tagore add to this rich heritage in the course of a literary career protracted for more than sixty years? He wrote more than one thousand remarkable poems, more than two thousand enchanting songs, nearly two dozen plays, eight novels, eight or more volumes of short stories in addition to several travel books and essays on literary cultural, political or linguistic subjects.

Besides his humanitarian or educational services, Tagore's paintings (1) and the abundance and variety of his work evoke for Bengali critics the three universal geniuses: Leonardo da Vinci, Goethe and Victor Hugo.

Every one has his personal predilection for Tagore as poet or prose writer. Nevertheless his prose writings such as the memorable short stories in *Galpagucha*, novels like *Gora, Choker-Bali, Ghare-Baire* (The Home & The World), *Shesher Kabita* (The Last Poem) are epochal events in Bengali literature. The rich personality of Tagore, his warm human sympathies, his narrative gifts are to be found only in his short stories.

DERIVING inspiration from Tagore, the novelist Sharatchandra Chatterji was to give a new orientation to the craft of fiction writing. Sharatchandra and his followers had the signal advantage of greater intimacy with the Bengal middle class and thus could depict the insistent reality of its sufferings and joys better than Tagore whose aristocratic upbringing constituted in this respect a serious obstacle.

Among others who gave or are giving new directions to Bengali prose literature, a few important names may be mentioned: Pramatha Chowdhury (a great connoisseur of French literature who exhorted Bengali prose writers to follow French literary precedents) Rajshekhar Basu, Bibhuti Bhushan Bondopadhyaya (author of *Pather Panchali,* and *Aparajita*), Banaphul, Tarashankar, Humayun Kabir, Annada Shankar Roy, Manik Boudopadhyaya and Kazi Abdul Wadud.

In the domain of the novel and short story, Bengali literature seeks to attain a level comparable with that of the West. Yet it must be admitted quite frankly that the greater part of its corpus lacks major stature because of a certain sentimentality and an unduly restricted vision of life.

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(1) *It is still a matter of controversy whether Tagore started painting at the age of* 65 *or* 70.

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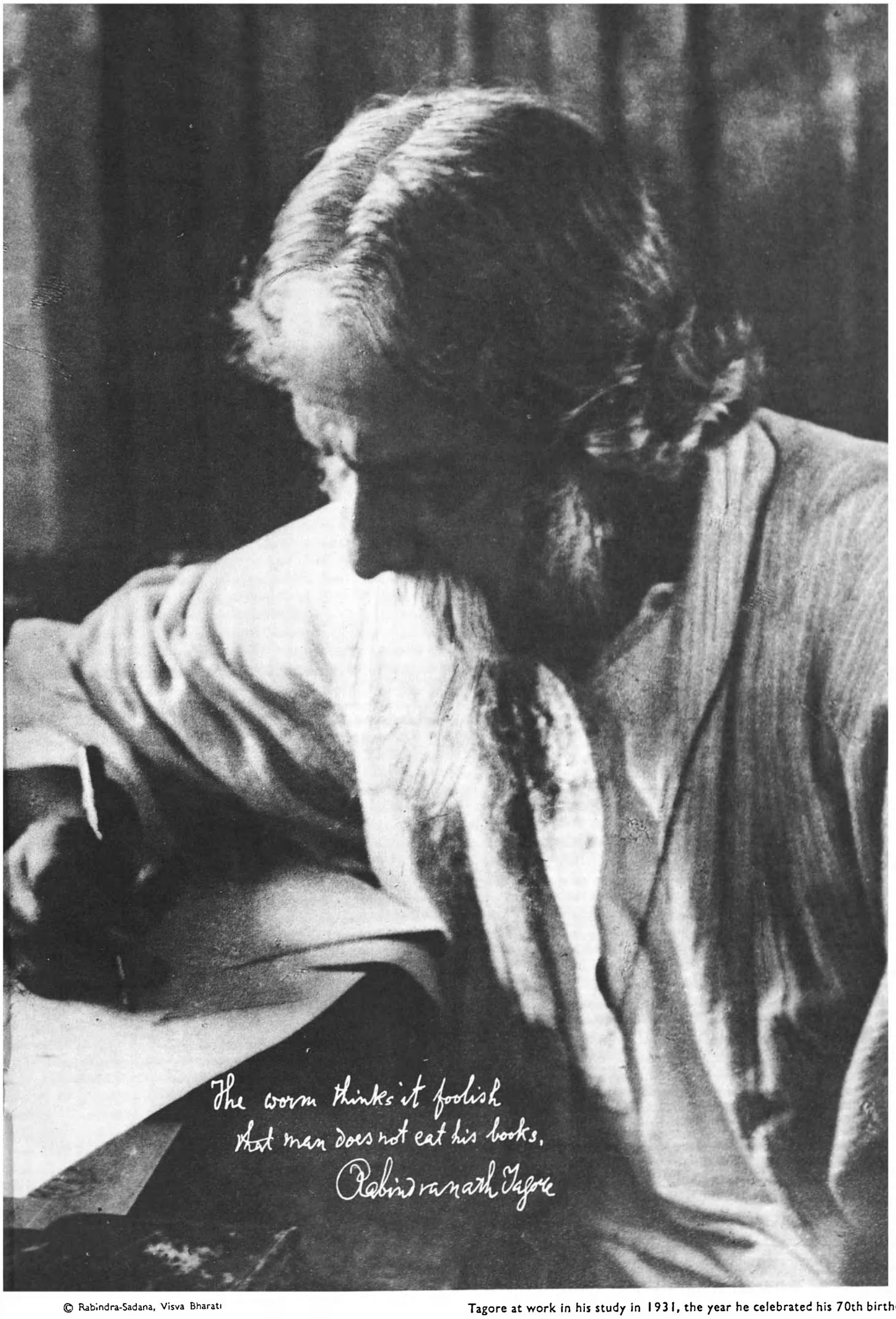

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Tagore at work in his study in 1931, the year he celebrated his 70th birthday.

Renaissance of Bengali letters

Let us return to Tagore. This time let us observe the mystery-world of his poetry. All Tagore's life constituted an immense creative effort to communicate his most sublime intuitions to the world. The manifold variety and profound depth of his poetic universe are so remarkable that it seemed he was "redeeming the debt of the world," a world which induced all the anguish and ecstasy of creation. It is not enough to have read *Gitanjali* or *Balaka* (The Swan) to understand this mysterious world; it is also necessary to read the poems that reflect the different phases of his poetic career.

In addition to his personal experience and the association of his great father, Debendranath, who had a profound understanding of the Persian mysticism, it is the influence of the Upanishads which left the decisive imprint upon his poetic vision—his love of nature, search for truth and for humanity; to him these are nothing but the characteristic signs of the Infinite.

This quest for the Infinite, as revealed in the Upanishads —"Bhumaiva sukama nalpe sukhamasti" (Beatitude reposes in the Infinite, not in the Finite)—became the motto of his poetic philosophy. It is astonishing to discover that Tagore's patriotism, under the influence of the Upanishads, was frequently at variance with public opinion. His predecessor Bankimchandra said:

> *Do not forget that love of one's countrymen ranks above all religion.*

Rabindranath wrote:

> *Build high the throne of your nation*
> *But remember it is not higher than truth*
> *If you really love your country,*
> *You must not rise above it,*
> *Not place your country above humanity.*

In his last years Rabindranath understood that with all his philosophical pretensions and poetic illusions he was inhabiting an ivory tower and suddenly felt the need to draw closer to plebeian reality. Now he wrote:

> *Sweet is the earth, sweet the dust of it,*
> *I've taken it in my heart,*
> *This great hymn*
> *Is the precept of my life.*
> *Day after day, I've received*
> *The gift of the truth,*
> *And its sweetness has no end...*

Or,

> *On the shores of Rupanarayan*
> *I awoke*
> *And I realized the world*
> *Is not a dream.*
> *I beheld my image*
> *In letters of blood.*
> *And I came to know myself*
> *Though profound wounds*
> *And through countless sufferings...* (2).

Although *Balaka* had been written in a new style and published before the First World War, Tagore realized that all he had written before then was highly conventional. Thus, with the changing situation, he started writing prose-poems on unconventional but quotidian subjects.

This new direction Tagore gave to Bengali poetry by his later writings served as a model for the young writers while the writers of his generation were still imitating his earlier style. Because of their conventional style and poor poetic techniques they were soon eclipsed by the brilliant achievement of Tagore.

Nonetheless two poets—Satyen Dutt and Mohitlal Majumdar (also a great critic)—deserve particular mention. Satyen Dutt, besides his innumerable poems on nature and patriotism which reveal extraordinary metrical

(2) *The French version of the last poems of Tagore, translated by Mahmud Shah Qureshi and André Guimbrétière was published in the* Revue Générale Belge, *June*, 1961.

Drawing by I. Ross, Rumanian National Commission for Unesco

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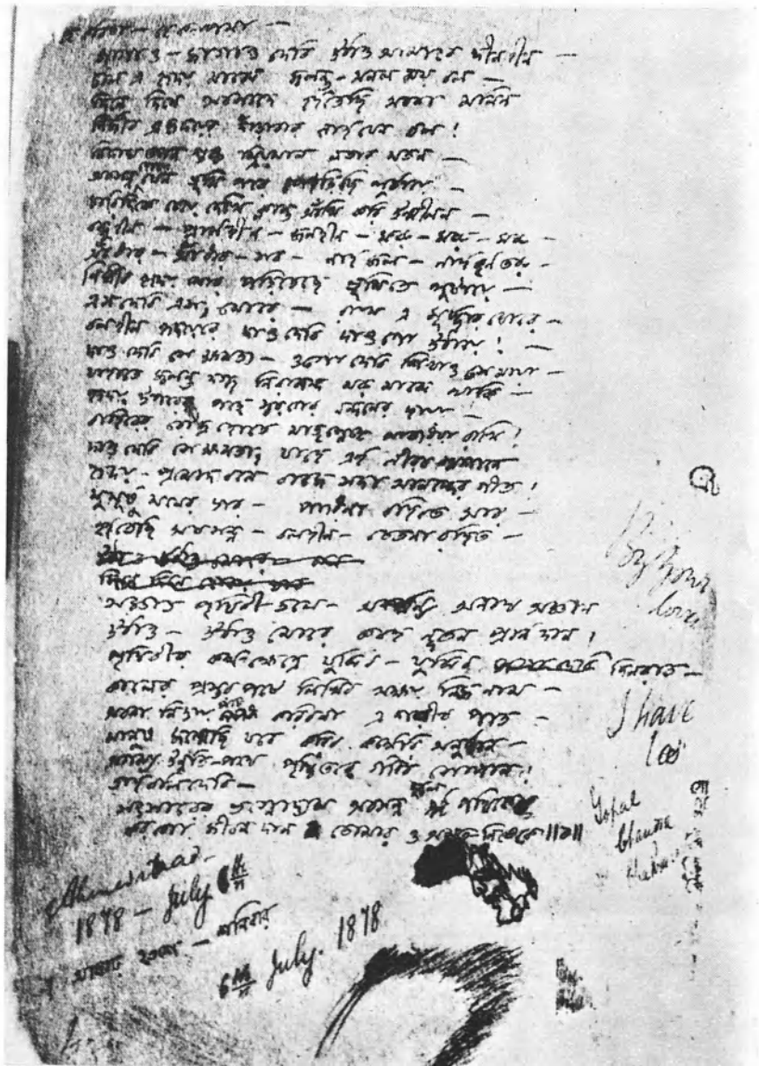

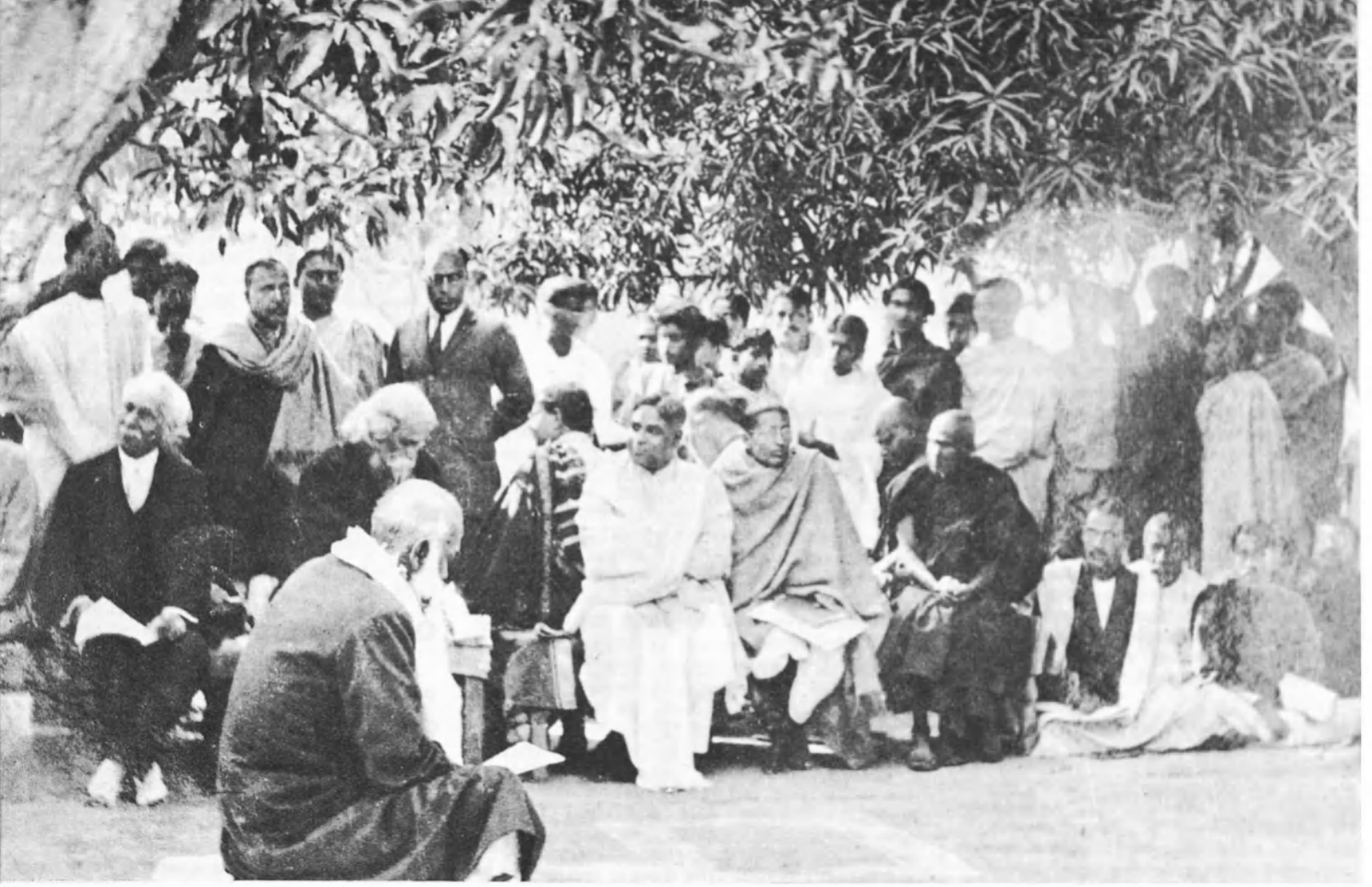

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A GREAT DAY in the life of Tagore was the laying of the foundation stone of Visva Bharati, the international university which grew from the school Tagore founded in 1901 at Santiniketan, as an experiment with only twelve pupils, including his own son. Photo above, was taken in 1921 at a Visva Bharati ceremony and shows, seated from left to right, Sylvain Levi, the French Orientalist, Tagore, and scholars who collaborated closely with him including, foreground, famous philosopher Brijendranath Seal. Left, a striking portrait of Tagore drawn by I. Ross and taken from "Tagore in Rumania", a selected bibliography published this year by the Rumanian National Commission for Unesco. The poet went to Rumania in 1926 during a long trip through Europe when he visited Italy, France, England, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria, before crossing the Danube into Rumania. Below left, the first extant manuscript written by Tagore aged 17. It is a Bengali poem in which the young poet calls on the muses.

skill, translated more than five hundred poems from different languages retaining all of their initial flavour and content. His translations of Victor Hugo, Ezra Pound, Verlaine, Maeterlinck, Baudelaire, Valéry, etc., preserve the original rhyme and rhythm yet offer the savour and qualities of true Bengali compositions. Satyen Dutt also re-introduced many Arabo-Persian words which are currently used in modern society or once were in medieval literature. This gave new vitality to poetry, particularly in the passionate poems of Mohitlal Majumdar.

The new literary fashion reached its height with the advent of a soldier-poet, Nazrul Islam, who accomplished a synthesis between the revolutionary tradition of Islam and the cult of Shakta (worship of the god of power). These two thought currents are absent in Tagore, yet, with the true generosity of genius, he acclaimed young Nazrul. Indeed, Nazrul set off a veritable explosion in the halcyon sweetness of Bengali poetry. The new awareness which he reflected quickly gained the attentive respect of the young writers. Thus he expressed himself in his famous poem *Vidrohi* (The Rebel):

I am a rebel, a hothead,
I do what my heart desires,
Good, bad, true or false
I grapple with Satan himself
I welcome death with a song...
I am the rebel, weary of struggle
Still I will not rest till the day
The aggressor's sword be sheathed
In the field of battle
And the cries of the oppressed
No longer rend the air, etc. (3).

In addition to a great number of poetic works, short stories and journalistic writings, Nazrul composed more than three thousand songs which are still extremely popular.

Jivanananda Das and Buddhadeva Bose, two great modern poets, derived their first inspiration from Nazrul. The genius of Tagore, in fact, offered an insuperable challenge to the young writers of the thirties, yet thanks to the example of Nazrul and to the new poetic creations of Tagore, they finally articulated a mature poetic idiom which is still in vogue. Western symbolism certainly has occupied a prominent place in the new poetry. Bishnu Dey, Sudhin Dutt and Samar Sen are names indissolubly linked with this movement. Besides these examples, Amiya Chakravarty in the tradition of Tagore, Jashimuddin (4) in the folklorique style and Farrukh Ahmad in the footsteps of Iqbal (5) added new chapters in the history of Bengali poetry.

In spite of that, whether in day-to-day activities or in intellectual pursuits, the Bengalis still remain dazzled by the luminous achievement and magnificent personality of Tagore. For the Bengali intelligentsia of India and Pakistan, perhaps Tagore's greatest contribution lies in the universal intellectual citizenship this achievement has so lavishly conferred upon their literature.

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(3) *Luce Claude Maitre in "Les Poètes Rebelles du Bengale" (Revue* Europe, *May,* 1954), *dealt with Nazrul and some other young poets.*

(4) *Two poems of Jashimuddin have been translated into French by Jacques Stepowski. An English translation under the title,* The Field of Embroidered Quilt *was published by Oxford University Press. Another book will constitute a* UNESCO *Translation Project.*

(5) *Muhammad Iqbal* (1873-1938) *is the greatest Urdu poet and most original thinker of Pakistan.*

READINGS FROM TAGORE

To celebrate the centenary of Rabindranath Tagore's birth in 1861, Unesco arranged this year for the translation and publication of six books (see boxed bibliography). On these pages we publish passages from A Tagore Reader just issued by the Macmillan Co., as part of the Unesco Collection of Representative Works—Indian Series. The reader offers a comprehensive view of Tagore's writing including passages from his books on travel, his letters, short stories, dramas, autobiographical sketches, conversations with famous people including Einstein, fables, philosophical meditations, art and literary criticism, education and selections from his poetry.

★

From 'A Sojourner in Japan'

When I took my seat at early dawn on a mat by the window, I realized that not only are the Japanese master-painters but they have reduced the whole of man's life to an art.

★

From Letters to a Friend

But by nature all men are *dwija* or twice-born, first they are born to their home, and then, for this fulfillment, they have to be born to the larger world. Do you not feel yourself that you have had your second birth among us? And with this second birth you have found your true place in the heart of humanity.

★

From 'Pathe O Pather Prante'

Something is taking shape throughout the universe and through all eternity. We feel the impact of it in the pain of our hearts. The stage at which man has arrived in the march of civilization has been attained by the creative endeavours of countless millions of unknown individuals, the history of whose personal struggles lies merged in oblivion. Whatever abides in creation is the momentary handiwork of the countless many who have passed away. Those architects of creation, those that are gone, are functioning within me—the thing called "I" only furnished them with a sort of prop. The scaffolding of a house in construction may be necessary today; by tomorrow when there is no trace left of it, no one will miss it. The completed building never sorrows for its lost scaffolding. The point is that as I pace this path I feel that much of the construction going on within me is being stored in the treasury of Man's creation, with the signature of my name obliterated.

From 'My Life'

In regard to music I claim to be something of a musician myself. I have composed many songs which have defied the canons of respectable orthodoxy, and good people are disgusted at the impudence of a man who is audacious, because he is untrained. But I persist, and God forgives me because I do not know what I do. Possibly that is the best way of doing things in the sphere of art, for I find that people blame me, but also sing my songs, even if not always correctly...

In the night we stumble over things and become acutely conscious of their separateness, but the day reveals the unity which embraces them. And the man whose inner vision is bathed in consciousness at once realizes the spiritual union which reigns over all racial differences, and his mind no longer stumbles over individual facts, accepting them as final. He realizes that peace is an inner harmony and not an outer adjustment, that beauty carries our assurance of our relationship to reality, which waits for its perfection in the response of our love.

★

Conversation with H. G. Wells

Tagore: The tendency in modern civilization is to make the world uniform. Calcutta, Bombay, Hong Kong and other cities are more or less alike, wearing big masks which represent no country in particular.

Wells: Yet, don't you think this very fact is an indication that we are reaching out for a new world-wide human order which refuses to be localized?

Tagore: Our individual physiognomy need not be the same. Let the mind be universal. The individual should not be sacrificed.

Wells: We are gradually thinking now of one human civilization on the foundations of which individualities will have great chance of fulfillment. The individual, as we take him, has suffered for the fact that civilization has been split up into separate units, instead of being merged into a universal whole, which seems to be the natural destiny of humankind.

Tagore: I believe the unity of human civilization can be better maintained by the linking up in fellowship and co-operation of the different civilizations of the world..."

★

From 'A Vision of India's History'

...We have come to know that what India seeks is not the peace of negation or of some mechanical adjustment, but that which is in goodness, and in truth of perfect union... The true prayer of mother India is:

> He who is one, who is above all colour distinctions, who dispenses the needs of men of all colours, who comprehends all things from their beginning to the end, let Him unite us to one another with that wisdom which is the wisdom of goodness.

★

On Education

When races come together as in the present age, it should not be merely the gathering of a crowd; there must be a bond of relation, or they will collide with each other...

The object of education is to give man the unity of truth. Formerly, when life was simple, all the different elements of man were in complete harmony. But when there came the separation of the intellect from the spiritual and the physical, the school education put entire emphasis on the physical side of man. We devote our sole attention to giving children information, not knowing that by this emphasis we are accentuating a break between the intellectual, the physical and the spiritual way of life...

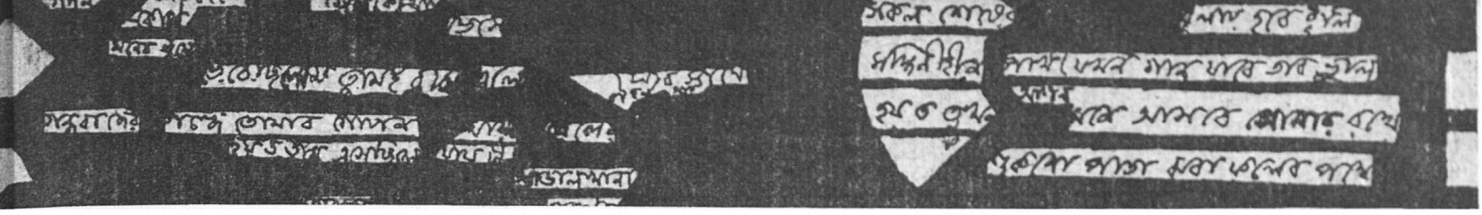
The child learns so easily because he has a natural gift, but adults, because they are tyrants, ignore natural gifts and say that children must learn through the same process that they learned by. We insist upon forced mental feeding and our lessons become a form of torture. This is one of man's most cruel and wasteful mistakes.

We rob the child of his earth to teach him geography, of language to teach him grammar. His hunger is for the Epic, but he is supplied with chronicles of facts and dates. He was born in the human world, but is banished into the world of living gramophones, to expiate for the original sin of being born in ignorance. Child-nature protests against such calamity with all its power of suffering, subdued at last into silence by punishment.

★

On Art and Literary Criticism

A fight has been going on for a long time around the saying, "Art for Art's sake," which seems to have fallen into disrepute among a section of Western critics. It is a sign of the recurrence of the ascetic ideal of the puritanic age, when enjoyment as an end in itself was held to be sinful. But all puritanism is a reaction. It does not represent truth in its normal aspect. When enjoyment loses its direct touch with life, growing fastidious and fantastic in its world of elaborate conventions, then comes the call for renunciation which rejects happiness itself as a snare. I am not going into the history of modern art, which I am not at all competent to discuss, yet, I can assert, as a general truth, that when man tries to thwart himself in



his desire for delight, converting merely into his desire to know, or to do good, then the cause must be that his power of feeling delight has lost its natural bloom and healthiness.

★

From 'Thoughts'

The true universal finds its manifestation in the individuality which is true. Beauty is universal, and a rose reveals it because, as a rose, it is individually beautiful. By making a decoction of a rose, jasmine, and lotus, you do not get a realization of some larger beauty which is interfloral. The true universality is not breaking down the walls of one's own house, but the offering of hospitality to one's guests and neighbours.

★

Children are living beings—more living than grown-up people who have built shells of habit around themselves. Therefore it is absolutely necessary for their mental health and development that they should not have mere schools for their lessons, but a world whose guiding spirit is personal love. It must be an ashram where men have gathered for the highest end of life, in the peace of nature; where life is not merely meditative, but fully awake in its activities; where boys' minds are not being perpetually drilled into believing that the ideal of the idolatry of the nation is the truest ideal for them to accept... where the sunrise and sunset and the silent glory of stars are not daily ignored; where nature's festivities of flowers and fruit have their joyous recognition from man; and where the young and the old, the teacher and the student, sit at the same table to take their daily food and the food of their eternal life.

★

We are like a stray line of a poem, which ever feels that it rhymes with another line and must find it, or miss its own fulfillment. This quest of the unattained is the great impulse in man which brings forth all his best creations.

★

Our greatest men have shown immense respect for mankind in their expectations.

★

The old is prudent but is not wise. Wisdom is that freshness of mind which enables one to realize that truth is not hoarded in caskets of maxims, it is free and living.

★

We come nearest to the great when we are great in humility.

★

If you shut your door to all errors truth will be shut out.

★

The false can never grow into truth by growing in power.

★

Man's history is waiting in patience for the triumph of the insulted man.

WORLD'S HOMAGE TO A UNIVERSAL MAN

MANY countries marked the anniversary of Tagore's birth throughout the year with special radio and television programmes, lectures, conferences, exhibitions, new translations of the poet's works, and essay contests in the secondary schools. Participating countries, in addition to those listed below, were Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Nepal, the Netherlands, Mexico, Poland, Rumania and Uruguay.

BRAZIL issued a Tagore commemorative stamp; translated several of Tagore's works into Portuguese, the books being distributed without charge to libraries and cultural centres in Brazil and neighbouring countries. New recordings of Tagore songs by Brazilian artists were made and given to libraries. A Tagore in Brazil exhibition held in Rio de Janeiro early in 1961 is now on tour in Brazil.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: The committee for the Tagore Centenary arranged an exhibition on Rabindranath Tagore and Czechoslavokia at the Naprstek Museum in Prague, organized a conference at Prague's Municipal Library, put on concerts of Czech music composed for Tagore's poems and translated much verse and prose.

FRANCE: On November 25, the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris opened a comprehensive exhibition on Tagore featuring rare documents, photographs, a special painting section. The complete collection of Tagore's works in Bengali were shown to the public along with translations of his works in French and other languages. The exhibition continues until December 17...

Other celebrations were held in Poris at the Musée Guimet, the Ecole des Longues Orientales and by the Comité France-Inde and in Lille.

GERMANY (FEDERAL REPUBLIC): Tributes to the great Indian poet began with a celebration in Cologne organized by the Deutsch-Indische Gesellschoft under the auspices of President Heinrich Lübke. Other cities presented such plays as *The Post Office*, *Sacrifice* and *The Red Oleander*, and an exhibition of Tagore's paintings.

INDIA: 1961 has been Tagore year throughout India. One of the highlights of many commemorative ceremonies in Tagore's own country was the International Literary Seminar, organized in New Delhi with the participation of Unesco, devoted to Tagore's immense influence on both Orient and Occident. A *mela* (fair) for Tagore—the traditional Indian way of honouring poets—was held in November and emphasized the cultural life and folk art of West Bengal... An All-India Bengali Literary Conference was held in co-operation with Unesco at the beginning of this year devoted to Tagore, the organization's first president. The session was opened by Prime Minister Nehru. Representatives of 23 countries attended discussions on philosophy, religion, rural reconstruction and other fields in which Tagore was engaged.

UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC: A Tagore week was observed in November with visiting Indian scholars invited to lecture. Works of Tagore in Arabic were published and an exhibition of the poet's painting displayed.

UNITED KINGDOM: A Tagore Foundation lectureship was established at the London University School of Oriental and African Studies providing for three to four lectures on Tagore each year in the summer term. In England also the dance-drama *Shyama* was produced with a full Indian cast and was such a success in London that it went on tour in the provinces and was recorded.

U.S.A. A Tagore chair of literature was established for a distinguished Indian scholar or public servant to visit the U.S. yearly to lecture at one the following universities: Chicago, California (Berkeley), Harvard, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. The Asia Society, the Library of Congress and the New York Public Library all arranged special exhibitions. A Tribute to Tagore evening was held at Town Hall, New York, with the American poet, Robert Frost, as principal speaker. Times Square, N. Y., was officially named Tagore Square for a day.

U.S.S.R. The Russians have always been avid readers of Tagore and although a 8-volume series of his works already existed, this year a 14-volume jubilee edition of his complete works was published. A Russian documentary film for the anniversary, produced by S. Boubrick and scripted by Soviet poet Mikhail Matusovsky, featured scenes shot in India and the Soviet Union, the Tagore paintings shown when he visited the U.S.S.R. in 1930, and excerpts from a ballet based on his play *Chitra*, staged during the year by the Kuibyshev Opera and Ballet Company.

FROM UNESCO'S COLLECTION OF REPRESENTATIVE WORKS

Indian Translations Series:

GORA by Rabindranath Tagore. French translation by Marguerite Glotz and Pierre Fallon. Published in 1961 by Ed. Robert Laffont (Paris).

A TAGORE READER, anthology edited by A. Chakravarty, Macmillan, New York ($6,50), London. (45/-)

POEMS OF KABIR—translated by Tagore—To be republished by Macmillan, London.

In preparation:

CHOIX DE CONTES (Selected Tales) of R. Tagore. Being translated into French by Mlle Bossenec. To be published by Editions Gallimard.

POÈMES ET SOUVENIRS D'ENFANCE de Tagore. Translated by Mlle Bossenec and Mr. Balbis.

Republished with Unesco's Endorsement:

BALAKA (Cygne) by Rabindranath Tagore. French translation by P.J. Jouve and Kalidas Nag. Editions Stock, Paris.

THE TUMULTUOUS HISTORY OF ANCIENT NUBIA

by Boris Piotrovsky

"DAWN was just breaking and there was a slight breeze blowing as we left the enchanting island of Philae. The greater the distance between us and the island, the more picturesque became its rows of columns and the higher its pyramidal pylons rose into the air. With every movement of our boat the gloomy cliffs took on different fantastic shapes and looked for all the world like supernatural beings. But no sooner had the first rays of the sun appeared than the visions of dawn vanished like a meteor..."

These words were written more than a hundred years ago by A. S. Norov, the Russian orientalist and statesman who visited Egypt at the beginning of 1835. His *Journey Through Egypt and Nubia* contains colourful descriptions of the majestic monuments to the past that are scattered between the First and Second Cataracts of the Nile.

When I made my trip from Aswan to Wadi Halfa in the Sudan in 1956 to study the archæological monuments in the area that will be flooded by the new Aswan Dam, I frequently recalled Norov's expressive descriptions.

For a long time only the magnificent Egyptian temples attracted the attention of scholars. Then a systematic archæological survey, carried out at the time the first Aswan dam was built, revealed the civilization of ancient Nubia, a country whose riches constantly attracted Egyptian conquerors.

In the fourth millenium B.C., the formative period of the ancient Egyptian state, upper Egypt and Nubia were inhabited by tribes with a common culture.

The Nubian civilization began to develop independently when the centre of the Egyptian state was moved to the north at the time of the Ancient Kingdom. Nubia became an Egyptian border region and the pharaohs of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Dynasties sent many expeditions there to bring back slaves, cattle, gold and ivory.

These predatory raids gave way to more peaceful relations at a later date, at the time of the 6th Dynasty. Although the Egyptian frontier passed through a point near Aswan there were Egyptian fortresses farther to the south, in the area occupied by the Nubian tribes, and their garrisons fought off the attacks of the Bedouins.

Inscriptions made by the Egyptian nobles Una and Huefkhor (middle of the third millenium B.C.) record interesting facts about the Nubians. Una tells how the Pharaoh Meren-ra ordered him to build cargo boats in Nubia for the transport of stone: the timber was supplied by the rulers of Nubia. Huefkhor's inscription contains fascinating details about the "exploration of the road" to the land that lay beyond the Second Cataract and also about three expeditions that returned from it safely with rich gifts.

Noticeable changes took place in the ethnic composition of the population of Nubia in the latter half of the third millenium B.C.; this was due to the infiltration of tribes of Negro herdsmen who established a new and independent culture and maintained intercourse with Egypt and the Red Sea coastal tribes.

Nubia began to grow stronger in the 19th century B.C., the period of the Middle Kingdom, and the Egyptian pharaohs sent their troops to subdue the country. Inscriptions by Pharaohs Amenemhet I and Senusret I tell of the stubborn struggle put up by the Nubian tribes in defence of their independence and of the cruel treatment meted out to them by the Egyptians. Egyptian texts then began to describe Nubia as "The Land of Kush."

Excavations made in various places in the Nile Valley have provided enough evidence to enable us to define the culture of these Nubian tribes.

As a result of the Egyptian advance against the northern frontiers of Nubia, the centre of the Nubian state was moved to the city of Napata, near the Fourth Cataract, far to the south. By the time of the 18th Dynasty (16th Century B.C.) the Egyptians had reached even this distant point. However, they succeeded in subjugating only the banks of the Nile and the fortresses they built were harassed by raiding tribes of nomads that appeared suddenly out of the desert.

The conquest of the whole of Nubia was completed during the 18th Dynasty: an Egyptian nomarch (ruler of an Egyptian nome or province), given the title of "Royal Son of Kush," headed the administration. The famous Egyptian conqueror, Tuthmosis III, left a triumphal inscription at Napata, the Nubian capital: it tells of his victories in Anterior Asia and of the Egyptian subjugation of Nubia to its southernmost limits, as far as the "horn of the earth." This short description tells of the conquest of all Nubia:

"I, the Pharaoh have all the Nubians as my subjects, they work for me as one man and are compelled to pay tribute in the form of a host of articles from the horn of the earth and an immeasurable quantity of gold from Waut. There they build big barges and ships, and in addition they pay tribute in ivory and ebony." The magnificent temples erected by the pharaohs of the 18th Dynasty confirm that they regarded Nubia as their own country.

BORIS PIOTROVSKY is Director of the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Archæology, Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., and a member of the International Committee of Experts for the Safeguard of the Monuments of Nubia.

The situation remained unchanged throughout the 19th Dynasty. Rameses II, the most famous representative of that dynasty, built a number of splendid temples in the first half of the 13th century B.C. in Northern Nubia (at Kalabsha, Gerf-Husein, Wadi-es-Sebua and Derr). The most famous of all is the huge temple at Abu Simbel.

The temples built by Rameses II are the last monuments to Egyptian rule in Nubia; the decline set in at the end of the 19th dynasty. At this time invasions from the north increased and although Herihor, the High Priest of Ammon, still held the title of nomarch of Nubia under Rameses XI, the country was gradually becoming independent. This was the beginning of the ascendency of the Kingdom of Napata.

The story of the rise of the Napata Kingdom remains unknown to us, for we know the history of Nubia (Ethiopia) mainly from the evidence of conquerors, from Egyptian written sources in particular. And, indeed, the magnificent Egyptian architectural monuments diverted the attention of archæologists from the ancient settlements and burial sites, the less imposing remnants of Nubian civilization.

In the 13th century B.C., the Kingdom of Napata was a powerful centralized state embracing the huge territory from the First (Aswan) Cataract in the North to the Sixth Cataract in the South. Some of the southern nomes of Egypt, those to the South of Aswan, fell to Nubia (the Ethiopian Kingdom).

When King Piankhi ascended the Napata throne (circa 740 B.C.) he took advantage of the internal dissension and the enmity between the rulers of the different nomes to launch a campaign against the country. He had adopted Egyptian culture and the Egyptian religion and invaded the country as its legitimate pharaoh, the worshipper of the supreme deity, Ammon.

An inscription by Piankhi in Egyptian has been discovered on a granite monument

near Napata; it describes the victories of the Nubian king in Lower Egypt, in particular the capture of Heliopolis and Memphis.

The king issued the following order to his troops on their behaviour in Thebes, in the Temple of Ammon: "When you reach Thebes and stand before Karnak, enter the water, cleanse yourselves in the river, put on your best linen raiment, lay aside your bows and arrows... There is no strength in those who know not Ammon... Sprinkle water on his altar. Kiss the ground before him."

Piankhi's victories were not consolidated, however, and when he returned to Nubia, Egypt again split up into a multitude of petty nomes.

The Nubian kings consolidated their power over Egypt under Piankhi's successor, Shabaka, the first pharaoh of the 25th (Ethiopian) Dynasty, who had to carry on a burdensome war against Assyria for Egypt's independence. Piankhi's son Tcharka also took part in battles against the Assyrians on the approaches to Egypt.

Tcharka became Pharaoh of Egypt in 690 B.C., at the time of the fiercest struggle against Assyria. The Nubian ruler met with temporary success in the early stages of the war but in 671 B.C., Assyrian troops under King Esarhaddon invaded Egypt, seized first Memphis and then the capital, Thebes. Tirhaka fled to Nubia, and Esarhaddon, to mark his victory, erected a statue of Tcharka, brought from Egypt, on the gates of his own capital, Nineveh.

When the pharaohs of the Sais Dynasty ascended the throne of Egypt, relations with Nubia became strained and intercourse between the two countries ceased. The Napata kings, however, retained Egyptian traditions, considered themselves legitimate successors to the pharaohs whose titles they bore, and were buried in pyramidal tombs.

Even this brief survey of the long and ancient history of Nubia shows it to have been one filled with conquests and destruction, undergoing periods of development and decline. Egyptian written records and art treasures are almost the only sources from which the history of this rich country may be studied. On the Egyptian monuments we come across images of black Nubian prisoners in leopard skins with ostrich feathers adorning their heads; there are scenes in which they are portrayed paying tribute in gold, ivory and strange animals. But the civilization of this country that brought such rich gifts to Egypt has not been studied archæologically.

Monumental edifices, gems of Egyptian architecture, were erected in northern Nubia and have remained to this day, victorious in the great battle against time.

But in addition to these grandiose monuments to the majesty of Egypt, there remain hidden in Nubia the relics of the little-known culture of those tribes on whose land and by whose hands these magnificent buildings were erected. The original and exalted culture of Nubia undoubtedly had considerable influence on the history of the entire North-East African area; for this reason archæologists and historians must make a careful study of the records of the ancient Nubian culture now awaiting discovery on the site of the future reservoir to be formed by the new Aswan Dam.

Foto-Henreid, Stockholm

Photo shows King Gustav VI Adolph of Sweden, chairman of the Committee of Patrons of the Unesco Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia, discussing the progress of the campaign with Dr. Mohamed Awad, Chairman of the Executive Board of Unesco. It was taken at a special session of the Swedish National Commission for Unesco attended by the King in Stockholm earlier this year.

THE ART OF ETHIOPIA'S PAINTER-SCRIBES

by Abbé Jules Leroy

Two years ago, in October 1959, the Unesco Courier devoted an issue to the lost past of Africa. At that time, the archæologist, J. Doresse, sketched a brief but evocative picture of the marvelous and legendary history of Ethiopia and described the essential characteristics of the Ethiopian personality and the way in which it has been formed by geography, ethnic mixtures and the often dramatic events of the past. His account of the "Empire of Prester John" naturally gave some space to its art. Unesco's recent publication of an album of reproductions of some of the most beautiful of the Ethiopian miniatures (1) reveals certain of the specific qualities underlying this supremely religious art which draws its inspiration from the Old and New Testaments and the Lives of the Saints.

ETHIOPIA is a land of mountain peaks. In fact, it is in the high plateau region, where one gasps for breath on wind-swept slopes that the life of the nation is concentrated. Here, at an elevation of seven to thirteen thousand feet, was created and developed a civilization which, from the point of view of political and cultural achievement and from that of the artistic monuments which record its long history, has no parallel in all Tropical Africa.

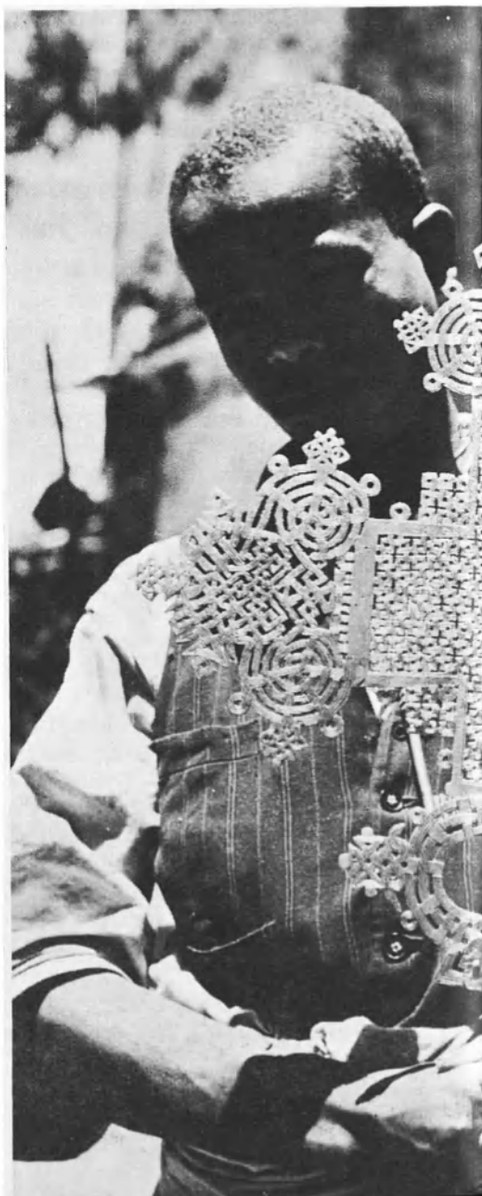
The monuments which date from the earliest period of Ethiopian culture, the famous monolithic "obelisks" of Axum, as huge as those of the Pharaohs, are a lasting tribute to the technical mastery that enabled these artists of the last centuries before our era to cut, decorate, transport and erect enormous stone blocks. They also cast light on the origins of this civilization. Although

(1) UNESCO *World Art Series Album:* Ethiopia, Illuminated Manuscripts, *price:* $18.00; £6.8.0. Published by the New York Graphic Society, 95 East Putnam Avenue, Greenwich, Conn., U.S.A.

Since Christianity was introduced into the ancient kingdom of Axum (today Ethiopia) in the 4th century, art and literature in this country have been almost exclusively ecclesiastical, and monasteries and churches have remained until recent times the sole guardians of culture. Below, on the Dabra Damo cliff, which can be climbed only with a rope, stands Ethiopia's oldest monastery church.

© P. Ravasio

Through the arrival of Christianity, Ethiopia shared in the flowering of art in the Byzantine world. Monasteries and Churches became centres of religious, cultural and political development. Ethiopian Chris-



it has often been erroneously traced to Egypt, its real birthplace is the kingdoms of the Arabian coast, which is only separated from the Abyssinian highlands by a narrow stretch of sea.

Engaged primarily in the spice trade, which long made *Arabia Felix* wealthy, and trading also in goods from Central Africa, these South Arabian kingdoms (Hadramut, Saba, Mina, Yemen...) obeyed a fundamental rule imposed upon all maritime communities. In order to survive, they had to establish trading posts abroad and, to defend them, colonize the surrounding countryside.

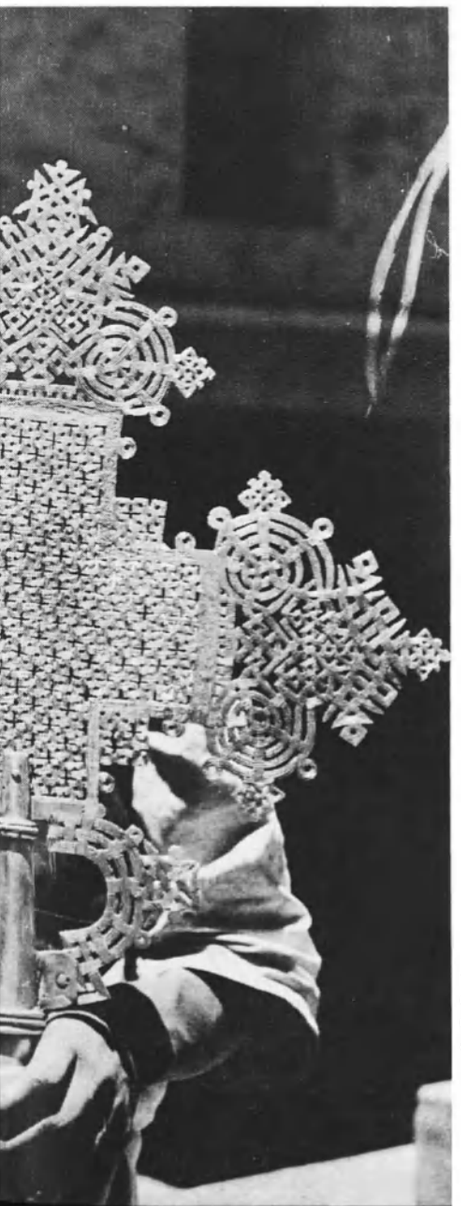
There can be no doubt that this historic law governed the foundation of the Axumite kingdom. There is much evidence to prove the common ancestry of the Ethiopian people and their neighbours. They do not belong to the Negro race. Both the color of their skin and their cultural traits relate them to the people of the Arabian peninsula. From them they took their first art, now well-known because of archæological excavations in the region of Axum. From them they also borrowed their Semitic language, Geez and even their Sabæan writing. They were not, however, slow in transforming the latter into the admirable Ethiopian alphabet which, with its 182 characters, is capable of rendering every nuance of pronunciation. As Mr. Doresse noted, Ethiopian borrowing has never been a simple copying. Everything was assimilated and transformed, and became the birthright of a united, active people who, at one time in their history (the third and fourth centuries A.D.), even succeeded in imposing their domination over the Arabian regions from which their ancestors came.

No doubt Ethiopia would have remained a part of Semitic civilization and culture had its destiny not been changed by a momentous event in the fourth century. This was King Ezana's conversion to Christianity by Frumentius, a native of Tyre in Syria.

The conversion, which took place around 340 A.D., had a double effect. It made Ethiopia the first Christian state of Tropical Africa. It also created a new mentality, a consciousness of being a special race, "chosen" by its acceptance and maintenance of the religion of Christ, an island in a sea of infidels. This frame of mind, whose roots are so evident in the Judaism which Ethiopian Christianity combined with the teachings of the New Testament to a greater extent than was done anywhere else, finds expression in the coronation ceremony which makes the Negus a kind of African Byzantine Emperor. One of his functions, according to the text of the Constitution of 1955, is in fact, "to defend the Holy Orthodox Faith based on the doctrines of Saint Mark of Alexandria" (art. 21).

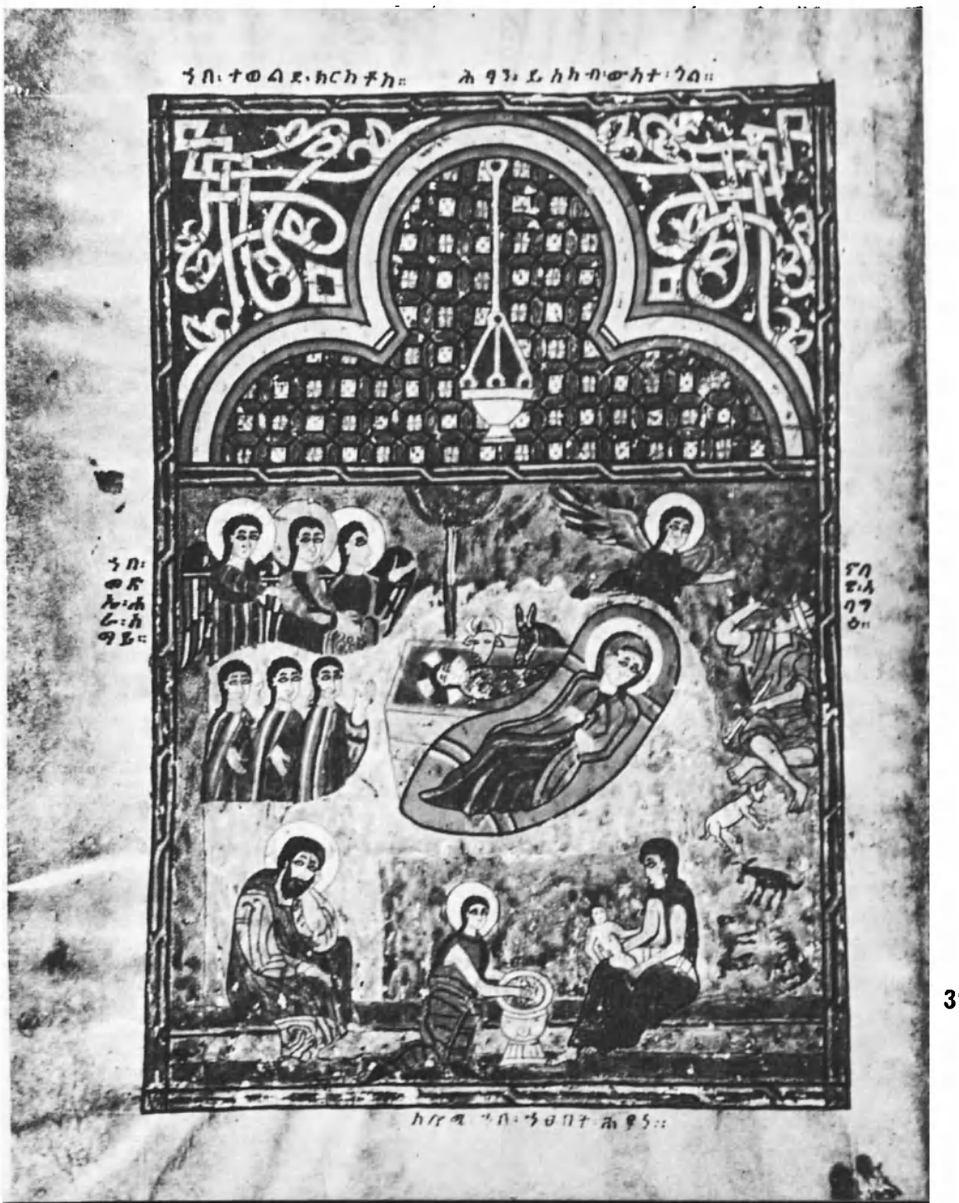
This psychology has given the Ethiopian Church a privileged place in the organization of the State. With the Emperor, it is even today the real unifying agent of a vast kingdom where several ethnic groups live side by side and where the large number of different languages and dialects could easily fragment the country. From this point of view, Ethiopia resembles all African countries, and has the same need for another language to make communication possible among its peoples. The Imperial proclamations, as well as the laws, are now drawn up in two languages, Amharic, the language of the Court, and English, which is thus promoted to the rank of a second official language.

tianity, in common with other Eastern churches, has never shown much interest in sculpture. The ancient Axumite Kingdom, however, boasted craftsmen capable of producing works like this ornate cross.



© G Cayla

No people has ever written so copiously on parchment as the Ethiopians. Today the art of writing and producing books in manuscript is still practised with the same traditional methods and processes as for centuries past. There are many remote churches and monasteries in the mountains where sacred books and prayer books are still hand written. Below, miniature illustrating the Nativity.



From the Kebran Manuscript. Unesco Album : 'Ethiopia, Illuminated Manuscripts

Illumination in the mediæval manner

Historically speaking, the Ethiopian Church has played a role analogous to that of the Latin and Greek Churches in the feudal society of the Middle Ages. In a very real sense, it has been the educator of the nation. It is in the Church that Ethiopia has found its scholars, artists and schoolteachers. Although the State is employing more and more teachers each year to staff the many schools it is constructing, it is still not unusual to find some priest or *dabtara* providing the ancestral form of instruction in country villages. He assembles all the school-age population under a shady sycamore at the edge of the village. Swaying rhythmically, the children chant in unison the letters or texts he has written on the blackboard. The long staff he carries is not just a badge of authority. He often uses it to call the children to order. For it is difficult to concentrate on the complicated Geez letters when thousands of the brightly-hued birds that enliven the Ethiopian landscape are flitting through the boughs overhead, their song mingling with the chorus of young voices.

The sole function of priest and *dabtaras* has not been the education of children. They have also been the principal artisans of Ethiopian culture as it is expressed in literature and art.

Enrico Cerulli, who is probably the greatest contemporary authority on Ethiopian literature, provides a penetrating study of its essential characteristics in his *Litteratura Etiopica* (2nd ed., 1960). These can be reduced to three: receptivity, in the sense that the Ethiopians have found their inspiration and doctrines in Greek, Syrian, Arab-Christian and Western sources; ability to adapt foreign elements to the taste of the country; and, finally, a sort of sclerosis, which compels authors to shackle their work in rigid, unchanging literary forms fixed by rules which nobody dares break.

THE art of Ethiopia reflects the same tendencies. Archæologists became aware of this when they discovered the influence of the architecture and sculpture of the South Arabian founders of Abyssinia upon the monuments of the Axumite period. But the quality of dependence is even more striking in the works Christian Ethiopia. One sees it in the astonishing rock churches, of which the ensemble of Lalibela offers the most remarkable examples, as well as in the paintings that decorate the walls of churches and the pages of manuscripts.

Of all forms of Ethiopian art, the illuminated manuscripts are known best. Painter-scribes have produced an incalculable number of them, following traditional methods which are still current in monasteries and at the Court. Beginning in the sixteenth century, many of these books, often decorated with brilliantly colored paintings, have found their way into large libraries like those of London, Paris and the Vatican. Their presence among us makes study of their themes, techniques and sources much easier.

IN a general way, one can say that Ethiopian painting exactly reflects the various contacts this far-off Christian kingdom has had with the rest of the world. A first period, as far as can be determined at present, seems to be fairly recent. These are the works of the 14th and 15th centuries, the period covered by the UNESCO albums. Beneath the naive features and the often clumsy drawing, analysis reveals the influence of Byzantine or Middle Eastern art which the Ethiopian painters could have known either from imported books or because they had seen it when they went on pilgrimages to Jerusalem.

A second period begins after the arrival of the Portuguese who, at the beginning of the 16th century, helped the Christians drive out the Moslem invaders led by Mohammed Granyé. With this contact, a new style appeared. Inspired by Western painting, it was more linear and elaborate than the earlier work. This was the epoch of the civilization of Gondar, which lasted for nearly two centuries. In the course of this long period tastes changed, and the imitation of Western styles became more marked, particularly as regards the use of perspective and relief, which were absolutely unknown before the massive penetration by Europeans.

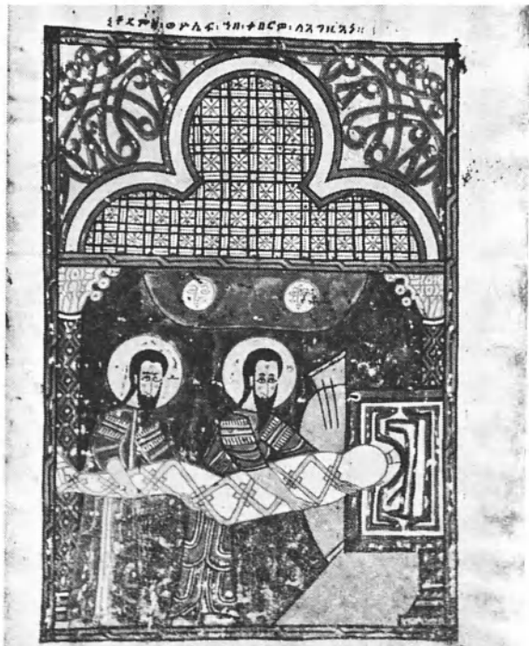
The penetration, which was much facilitated by the opening of the Suez Canal and the European policy of Menelik and his successors, has excercised a pronounced influence upon modern Ethiopian painting, and particularly upon the work of young contemporary artists. While some remain faithful to the aesthetic and iconographic rules inherited from the past, others, trained in the methods taught in foreign schools, are completely Western in technique and style. It is too early to say what effect their innovations will have on the traditional painting of Ethiopia. But one thing is sure. It will remain true to itself and, as it has always done in the past, will once again assimilate outside influence without losing its own personality.

A scholar and authority on Middle East manuscripts, Abbé Jules Leroy is a former director of the Imperial Section of Archæology in Addis Ababa. He is now attached to the Centre National de Recherche Scientifique *in France.*

LUKE THE EVANGELIST. A portrait of St. Luke writing the first words of his gospel. Miniature from the Kebran Manuscript (early 15th cent.). Preserved in St. Gabriel's Church in the Lake Tana region.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT TO MARY. In this stiff, formalized version of the annunciation scene, the Virgin is shown spinning. Taken from the manuscripts of the Jahjah Giyorgis gospels (Mid-15th cent.)

THE ENTOMBMENT. Here the Ethiopian miniaturist has depicted disciples bearing the body of Jesus towards a grave depicted as a geometric, abstract shape. From the manuscript of St. Arsima.



Paintings from Unesco World Art Series Album: 'Ethiopia, Illuminated Manuscripts'

Letters to the Editor

AFRICA'S WILD LIFE IN PERIL

Sir,

The success of the recent Arusha Conference must largely be ascribed to the change of attitude so clearly brought out by the African participants themselves toward their unique wildlife resources. The earnest desire of modern African States to continue and actively expand the efforts made in the field of wildlife management is greatly encouraged by the interest and support of international organizations.

Your Sept. 1961 issue devoted to the world's wildlife heritage, not only showed UNESCO's interest, but the excellent choice of the cover photographs ably illustrated the fact that the Organization understood the problems involved "from beginning to end." Your choice of the elephant, as the most striking, as well as the most adaptable of all animals—after man—could not have been a happier one.

Gerald G. Watterson
Secretary-General - IUCN
Morges près Lausanne, Switzerland

Sir,

Your issue on Africa's Wildlife in Peril (Sept. 1961) was absolutely magnificent. As a member of the Fauna Preservation Society and as "A Friend of I.U.C.N." I was delighted with it. I have just ordered four more copies to send to some of my friends.

Dr. T. H. Bassett
Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada

Sir,

Having spent two months on safari (photographic) in East Africa this winter, I read with much interest and understanding Sir Julian Huxley's article in the September Courier on "Poaching". The fact of knowing beforehand about the systematic slaughter by organized commercial poachers of the wild game in Africa, made me view the relatively few remaining animals with wonder closely allied to a sense of sadness and despair.

Were these gazelles moving across the plains, these rhinos, elephants and giraffes who form our last link with the prehistoric age, soon to disappear from the world, leaving future generations with only written and pictorial records of what Africa once meant to everyone who, if only in their imaginations, loved and revered its great wild life heritage? And the new States of Africa, how would they develop and progress when deprived of one of their main economic revenues?

Sir Julian speaks of the vital necessity of the new African governments recognizing and supporting their national parks to achieve "Profit, Protein, Pride and Prestige." It is significant and depressing to note, in the words of Sydney Downey, one of East Africa's leading conservationists, in connexion with the recent International Game Conference in Arusha, Tanganyika that "no member of the Kenya Government and no Kenya African politician could take the trouble to attend." Obviously at present little help or co-operation can be expected in this direction.

What can be done, then, to prevent one of the few remaining wonders, not only of Africa but of the world, from being totally annihilated through ignorance, savagery and greed? Until the inexperienced and short-sighted African Governments can be shown the inestimable value to themselves and their countries of this wild life heritage, it remains the task of world organizations and of influential individuals, to give aid both in financing the upkeep of the National Parks (thereby eliminating poaching) and in continually educating the African people and their leaders to the realization that without this unique inheritance, East Africa particularly would lose its greatest natural resource.

If world opinion has been roused to save the monuments of Nubia (monuments which exist in a country already overrich in historical buildings, etc.) surely "the task of saving the threatened wild life in Africa" should take priority? If this aid is not given now, Africa's only *living* monument to the past will be lost forever.

Noreen Curry
Winnipeg, Canada

JAPAN MISREPRESENTED

Sir,

I welcomed the article "Japan Misrepresented" having felt for some time that there are gross misrepresentations and therefore gross misconceptions taught in schools in the subjects of geography and history. Particularly is this inexcusable in the highly educated countries of the western world, where large sums are spent on education. Schools seem to set a national identity for a country, and stick with it regardless of changes within that country.

Colin Jose
Moose Jaw, Saskatchewam, Canada

Sir,

Can you kindly forward the enclosed chapter on Japan from the textbook *Eurasia* to Mr. Tatsumi Shimada, author or the article "Japan Misrepresented" in the April, 1961, issue of THE UNESCO COURIER. Dr. Robert M. Glendinning, the author of *Eurasia*, and the editorial staff at Ginn and Company have made every effort to present an accurate picture of Japan to school children in the United States.

We will welcome Mr. Shimada's evaluation of our material and will give serious consideration to all suggestions which he may have for its improvement.

Robert N. Saveland, Editor
Lands and Peoples of the World
Boston, Mass, U.S.A.

Ed. note: THE UNESCO COURIER *applauds this initiative of Lands and Peoples of the World in seeking to present a true picture of Japan to U.S. schools and hopes the example will be followed by other publishers. The text of* Eurasia *has been forwarded to Mr. Shimada.*

Sir,

"Japan Misrepresented"—A Look at Foreign Textbooks, was very interesting. Textbooks with inappropriate pictures were exhibited at an Exhibition Hall in Tokyo recently and I saw many of them with my own eyes. That article reminds me that the Japanese themselves may misunderstand the real life of other nations. Naturally, the mutual understanding of all the nations in the world must be attained through the medium of periodicals of many countries. I am much impressed that the UNESCO COURIER took up such problems and showed actual mistakes with pictures to the readers. However, I believe it would have been much more effective if you had printed those examples with the right pictures of present-day Japan.

Masaharu Inatomi
Nerima ku, Tokyo

THE CURSE OF THE ALBATROSS

AN APOLOGY

Sir,

In my article "The Curse of the Albatross—A Mariner's Myth", which was published in the March 1961 issue of THE UNESCO COURIER, I did not indicate that I was very largely inspired, when writing this article, by the book entitled "The Wandering Albatross" by Admiral Sir William Jameson. I very much regret that I omitted to indicate such an important source. For this omission I wish to apologize both to Admiral Jameson and to UNESCO.

I would be obliged if you would publish this rectification in an early issue.

David Gunston
Denmead, England

From the Unesco Newsroom

DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF UNESCO RESIGNS
Mr. RENÉ MAHEU NAMED AS ACTING HEAD

Dr. VITTORINO VERONESE

Mr. RENÉ MAHEU

Unesco photos

THE resignation of Dr. Vittorino Veronese as Director-General of Unesco and the appointment of Mr. René Maheu as Acting Director-General until the November 1962 session of the General Conference were announced on November 2. The resignation of Dr. Veronese was announced in the following statement made by Dr. Mohamed Awad of The United Arab Republic, chairman of the Unesco Executive Board.

"The Executive Board of Unesco deeply regrets to announce that it has received from the Director-General of Unesco, Dr. Vittorino Veronese, a letter asking that he be relieved of his post as Director-General. Dr. Vittorino Veronese has been lately on leave for medical reasons; and, although he has fully recovered his health, does not consider it advisable that he should continue to assume the heavy duties and responsibilities which his post as Director-General of Unesco demands. For this reason he has asked the Board to accept his resignation as soon as possible. The Executive Board, while recognizing the great services rendered to the Organization by Dr. Veronese in the past three years, cannot nevertheless, oppose the wishes of one to whom it is so deeply indebted, and has therefore no other course but to accede to his wish and accept his resignation."

The Executive Board then unanimously appointed Mr. René Maheu as Acting Director-General until the next session of the General Conference elects Dr. Veronese's permanent successor.

Dr. Veronese was born in Italy on March 1, 1910. After becoming a member of the Italian National Commission for Unesco he was elected to membership of Unesco's Executive Board in 1952, and became its chairman in 1956. He was elected Director-General of Unesco in December 1958.

Mr. René Maheu was born in France on March 28, 1905. He graduated from the Ecole Normale Supérieure and taught philosophy at the University of Cologne (1931-33), the French Institute of London (1933-1939) and the Franco-Moslem College of Fez (1940-42). From 1936 to 1939, he served as Cultural Attaché with the French Embassy in London, before entering military service. Mr. Maheu joined Unesco in September 1946, as head of the Division of Free Flow of Information. In 1949, Dr. Jaimes Torres Bodet, then Director-General of Unesco, appointed him as Director of his Office. He was appointed Assistant Director-General in July 1954, and, with the same rank, Unesco Representative to the United Nations in New York in November 1955. Mr. Maheu returned to Unesco Headquarters in December 1958 and in November 1959 was appointed Deputy Director-General by Dr. Vittorino Veronese.

THE UNESCO PHILATELIC SERVICE

The work of the U.N. Economic Commission for Africa has been commemorated in the stamp above which was issued by the United Nations Postal Administration on October 24 (U.N. Day) as the fourth in its 1961 series of commemorative stamps. This U.N. Commission seeks to promote concerted action for the economic development of Africa, including its social aspects, especially the standard of living of its peoples. The stamp has been issued in two denominations: 4 cent (blue, orange, yellow and light brown) and 11 cent (green, orange, yellow and dark brown). As the agent in France of the U.N. Postal Administration, Unesco's Philatelic Service stocks all the United Nations stamps currently on sale. It also has stamps and first day covers issued by many Unesco member states to commemorate important events in the history of Unesco and the U.N. (inauguration of Unesco's headquarters, Human Rights Day, World Refugee Year). Information on items available, their price and the methods of payment will be sent on request by the Unesco Philatelic Service, Place de Fontenoy, Paris 7e.

Imp. GEORGES LANG, PARIS - IMPRIMÉ EN FRANCE

UNESCO ART SLIDES

A collection of colour transparencies to make known to the public masterpieces of world art which, in spite of their importance for the history of art and for the understanding of the genius of the nation which created them, are all too often unknown. Most of the slides are based on the Unesco World Art Series Albums, with which readers of the Unesco Courier are already familiar.

The slides, produced for Unesco by Publications Filmées d'Art et d'Histoire in Paris, are of top quality and reasonably priced. They are presented in a plastic case for ready projection, each series containing thirty transparencies, in mounts 5 x 5 cm, and an explanatory booklet with text and titles in French, English and Spanish.

The very high standard of colour reproduction makes these slides valuable not only to teachers and lecturers but also to art lovers everywhere.

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To be published shortly:

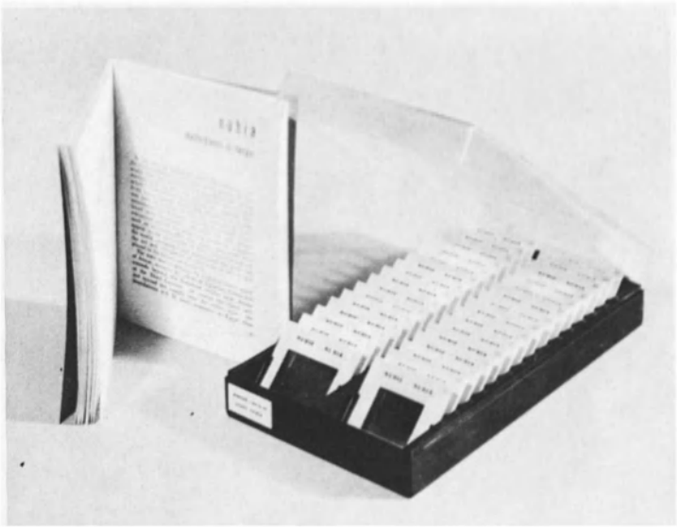
12. MEXICO: Prehispanic Paintings.
13. JAPAN: Early Buddhist Paintings.
14. CZECHOSLOVAKIA: Manuscripts with Roman and Gothic Paintings.

Prices vary according to country, but do not exceed the equivalent of $10 in local currency.

In certain countries special agents have been appointed for the sale of Unesco Art Slides (see following list)—orders and requests for further information should be sent direct to these addresses.

Argentine: Editorial Sudamericana, S.A., Alsina, 500, Buenos Aires.
Australia: Tradco Agencies, 109, Swanston Street, Melbourne, C.1.
Belgium: Louis de Lannoy, 22, place de Brouckère, Brussels.
Denmark: Mellemfolkelight Samvirke, Kronprinsessegade 32 (4), Copenhagen.
France: Unesco, DPV, 7, place de Fontenoy, Paris (VII°).
Publications Filmées d'Art et d'Histoire, 44, rue du Dragon, Paris (VI°).
Rousseau, 6, place Chapou, Cahors (Lot).
India: National Education and Information Films Ltd., National House, Tulloch Road, Apollo Bunder, Bombay 1.
Israel: Blumstein's Bookstores Ltd., 35, Allenby Road, and 48 Nahlat Benjamin Street, Tel-Aviv.
Spain: Librería Científica Medinaceli, Duque de Medinaceli 4, Madrid 14.
Sweden: Svenska Unescoradet, Vasagatan 15-17, Stockholm C.
Switzerland: Films Fixes Fribourg S.A., 20, rue du Romont, Fribourg.
United Kingdom: Educational Productions Ltd., East Ardsley, Wakefield, Yorkshire.
All branches of H.M. Stationery Office.
U.S.A.: Unesco Publications Center, 801, Third Avenue, New York 22, N.Y.

For countries not listed, application should be made to National Distributors for Unesco Publications (see list below).



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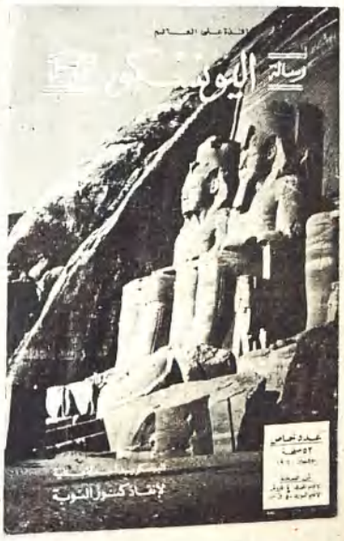

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